

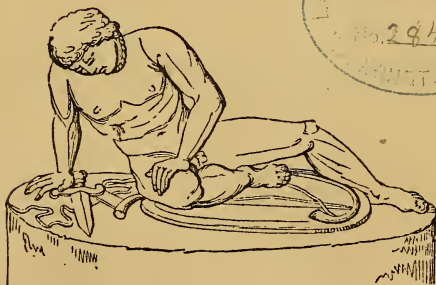
THE COLISEUM.

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THE
LAST GLADIATORIAL SHOW.

BY
JOHN T. SHORT.



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PREFACE.



WE take pleasure in presenting this little volume to the YOUNG PEOPLE, particularly the more advanced, who are forming a taste for historical reading.

Imperfect as it may be, if it should induce any to turn their attention to the inexhaustible storehouses of fact, rather than to the emptiness of fiction, it will have served its purpose. While it has been our endeavor at all times to represent to you, in a small measure at least, the wonderful influence of Christianity upon a dark age, we have not sought to cover up the inhuman vices of that age, but have brought them forward for your abhorrence.

A work of this nature is, of necessity, to a great extent, historical in itself; and for those who may desire a more extended reading on the subjects herein mentioned, as well as for the purpose of rendering "credit to whom credit is due," we have appended occasional references to some of the chapters.

J. T. S.





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PART I.

GLADIATORS.

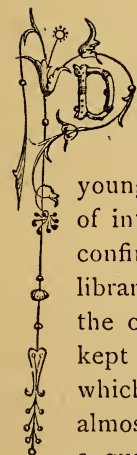


GLADIATORS.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY HISTORY.



DEAR READER, the subject we have before us is an old one, yet has never been presented in a readable form to young knowledge-seekers. Its great fund of interesting information has mostly been confined to the dusty shelves of classical libraries, locked up in the silence in which the old Latin and Greek languages have kept it. We know of no better way in which we can avoid the arduous labor and almost endless task of translating "many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore" than by visiting old Italy ourselves, the cradle and the grave of gladiators. You and I,

then, in company, propose to pay a visit to those scenes of bloodshed and barbarity enacted two thousand years ago. What if we do live in the nineteenth century? All the better. We have a grand advantage over our fellow-Roman spectators. They viewed them as heathens do; we will view them as Christians. Three things in particular are necessary in making our visit. First, we must transport ourselves to the sunniest of lands in Southern Europe, and touch at Rome, its capital. A pretty long journey indeed. Yet, as we are moderns, even though we do intend to pay a visit to the past, I do not see that we should be denied the use of the speediest means of travel employed in these fast times. In fact, in view of the peculiar nature of our visit, the speediest of all will be far the best; and, as you leave the choice with me, I know none quicker than thought. (By this we mean the common acceptation of this term.)

The *second* necessity is also a journey, not through space, but through time. Instead of miles to measure by, we will now use years. We want to count out about two thousand of them, backward, in our time-glass. A tiresome journey this one is, as is the other; but, by using the same conveyance, they are both easily accomplished.

Our *third* necessity is, that we should be long-lived. Although we do not go quite back to the patriarchs, why can not we live as long as they, at least six short centuries and a half, so that we may grow up and witness the progress of gladiatorial combats in the different stages of their development, and then be allowed to die with them as nobly and well as did our hero St. Telemachus.

Two hundred and sixty-four years before Christ, upon the Mediterranean—that highway of the nations—we find three great centers, around which lesser states and kingdoms have grouped themselves, and before whose threatening arms all tremble. Athens, the first and oldest of these three, is already on the decline. Content with the glory of her former arms and triumphs, like an oarsman resting on his oars, she has, at the same time, lost the battle and the race for glory, and her scepter has passed into the hand of a stranger (Antigonus of Macedonia). Just across the water, to the southward, is Egypt, the land of pyramids and Ptolemies. Philadelphus is her sovereign, under whose direction the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into the Greek language, but whose throne is now shaken by civil dissension. In Italy we find Rome; yes, and in her “heroic age” at that—in the days of the Republic. Her sun, though hardly at its zenith yet, is advancing

rapidly thitherward. Her arms are the terror of all peoples. Her power is waxing greater, while that of all others is waning. She is absorbing the rest. Utter heathenism is the religious characteristic of this age ; nevertheless, virtue has not yet taken her departure. Such are the times in which we are now supposed to be living. Having arrived at Rome, we proceed to consider the subject which has brought us hither. Like all tourists, we must be on the lookout for sights of every description, but in particular for gladiatorial shows. Although living in the two hundred and sixty-fourth year before Christ, yet we are Christians. The scenes that we have come to look upon are of the wickedest sort ; and, while we do not believe the old adage, "A bad beginning makes a good ending," we trust that the acquaintance we have formed may see a better end than the beginning that we are about to make. We, however, hope, before that end, to look upon the good, the true, the noble, and love them more for first having seen the bad.

But who are these coming down the street ? They appear to be mourners ; yes, it is a funeral—of some nobleman at that. How immense the train ! How rich the cloak of that Senator yonder as he walks in the dress of his office !

The bier upon which the corpse is laid is borne

on the shoulders of men. Here are the family of the deceased, all dressed in white, the mourning of the Romans. Following them is a long train of clients, bitterly bewailing the death of their lord. Next comes a great retinue of slaves, not different from the rest in color; for the Roman slave is not the dark-skinned savage caught on the southern coast of Africa, but the prisoner taken in war, who often has as much culture, and even more wealth, than has his master. A promiscuous crowd of people compose the remainder of the procession, all eager to see the funeral ceremonies outside of the city. Let us join them.

Passing through the gate, we arrive at a place where a lofty pile of dry wood has been carefully erected. Upon this pile the corpse is laid; a friend steps forward and pronounces a short eulogy upon the noble dead, and invokes the favor of the gods upon the solemnities about to be celebrated in honor of the departed spirit of Brutus, one of that noble line which sprung from Junius Brutus, who, two hundred and forty-five years since, banished the Tarquins from Rome, and changed the government from a monarchy to a republic.

A fire-brand is applied to the funeral pile, and, in an instant, all is ablaze.

The greedy flames have already hidden the

corpse from view. Hitherto it had been the custom for the friends of noble Romans to sacrifice one or more slaves at their burial. It was to see this cruel barbarity that many had assembled, and it is with a shout of applause that they hail the appearance of the two sons of the deceased, followed by two slaves armed with short, sharp swords. Poor wretches—the expression of their faces alone is enough to make one's heart sick. The last hope of life, and liberty, and friends is smothered. Despair is traced in every feature. Those stalwart limbs that have endured many a weary march, and those sinewy arms that have struck many a death blow in the wars for freedom, are now helpless as those of a child. They come expecting to be sacrificed to the departed spirit of the dead. But, for the first time, the custom is to be departed from, and it is announced that these two warriors are to fight for their life. But this is not all—the victor shall have his freedom. A sudden change passes over those downcast countenances. As to Samson of old, strength returns to those limbs. They grow impatient to face the death so certain to one of them, and this impatience arises only from the faint glimmer of hope which flashes through their minds. A distant picture of home and loved ones now nerves them for the combat.

But who are these men? How came they here? Such physical frames are rarely met with. One is a Gaul, whose boyhood's home was among the Alps. Over their snowy peaks and yawning abysses he had hunted the chamois, and had inhaled from those mountain fastnesses the inspiring air of freedom. He had joined his fellow-countrymen in their march on Rome, and had been taken captive in battling the Roman Consul Quintus Æmilius. Eighteen long years had he spent in servitude, and now had come to die in a gladiatorial combat. The other warrior is one of those bold, hardy Etrurians who dwell north of the Tiber—a son of Italy, with the same fire in his blood as have his captors. He was taken captive in the same battle with the Gaul. How well they are matched! Their stalwart limbs are covered with knots of muscles, their arms and chests are like those of some colossal statue. Their dress consists only of a helmet, a girdle, and sandals. Thus arrayed for the encounter, the signal is given. Shall we turn away our eyes? If we were to consult the better side of our nature we certainly would. But the sight before us is so novel and exciting that we can not refrain from looking. With uplifted swords they advance and meet. At first they parry with each other, but soon strike more boldly. Now their blades clash

loudly together. One yields a step, and then regains it. Ah! one is slightly wounded—it is the Gaul. Like a Numidian lion enraged, he springs toward his foe, who, by a skillful side-movement, avoids him, and assumes an attitude of defense. The fight is no longer a play, nor an exhibition of skill simply as such. Determined on death or victory, they close in awful combat. Can we look any longer? Yes, we must. The Gaul drives his sword into the shoulder of the Etrurian, who, at the same time, receives his assailant on the point of his blade. Fortunately for the Gaul, the steel strikes a rib, and goes no farther; but that good fortune is only temporary. The Etrurian, mangled and bleeding, refuses to die; and, with yet a faint hope of life and liberty, begins anew, and the scene of blood is only completed by each plunging his sword into the other's breast. The Etrurian, from weakness and loss of blood, immediately drops dead. The Gaul, with a faint grasp, snatches the sword from his own bosom, and, falling upon his elbow, looks first toward the far North, and then to the sun just sinking into the western sea, and bids it a last farewell, as he recalls to mind the last time he saw it set from the craggy Alps.

“You are free!” is the shout that arises from the multitude. Startled, and as though new life

had returned, he raises himself to a sitting posture, mutters for the last time that dear word, and then falls back *free indeed*; free from the cruelties of this world; free from the bondage he had endured for so many years. Is not this all? No. The same barbarity is yet to be repeated twice. We can look on no longer; we can not witness such another sad scene. So we can withdraw until the heathen ceremony is over, and then we will observe what transpires. The fight ended, the excited crowd disperses—the dead bodies of the gladiators are dragged off, and thrown into the Tiber.

The attendants carefully gather up the ashes of the deceased Brutus and place them in a costly urn. This, with vessels containing little phials of tears shed by the mourners, is deposited in the family tomb side by side with the ashes of his noble ancestors.

Thus ends the *first* gladiatorial show. Heart-sickened and disgusted we are indeed with the cruelty of our Roman friends, and were it not that we have come so far to see the wickedness of the great city—the natural outgrowth of a religion without any love or mercy in it—we would invite you to mount again our airy car and return with me across the broad expanse of waters that separates us from a land of peace and fraternal

love. But the fates will otherwise. We have a work to do, and that is to view these scenes of cruelty from their origin to their decline and ruin.

Let us return to the city, wiser and better, if it may be, from this day's experience.





CHAPTER II.

AMPHITHEATERS.

LET us live hastily now for a couple of centuries, only noting the exhibition of the most important gladiatorial combats.

The mere knowledge of their having been exhibited is sufficient for our purpose. The Romans had become so impassioned at the sight of blood, at such funeral solemnities as that of Brutus, as to be altogether too impatient to wait for the death of prominent citizens. At their funerals alone they celebrated these barbarities; so they instituted these very games for popular amusement in their forum. O, Rome! how cruel thou art becoming! With thy growing power thy inhumanity increases. We know thy claim that familiarity with blood makes thee more brave, gives thee that irresistible heroism that is conquering the world so fast. Tribe after tribe bows in allegiance, prince after prince crowns the triumphal march of some conqueror through thy

imperial city. Why, already it is "better to be a Roman than to be a king." It is not enough for thee to vote a triumphal entrance to your victorious generals, with royal captives chained to their chariot-wheels, and hundreds of servants bearing the rich spoils of cities on their shoulders; but, to all this, you must add gladiatorial shows, held in your forum, the very place where public justice is administered, and yet you make it the place of the severest injustice to slaves.

The forum, then, is a place of interest to us. Let us visit it. We find it situated on a large, open space between the Capitoline and Palatine hills. Rectangular in its form, but considerably longer than it is wide. It is surrounded with elegant and spacious halls of white marble in which the courts are held. It is adorned with statues, and at one extremity is a magnificent rostrum upon which the eloquence of Rome is paraded. It is the place where all public and political meetings are held; in fact, it is the public square.

On one side of the square, as we have chosen to call it, are shops of merchandise and provisions in general, where the people buy their marketing. We have been in Rome only fifty years (which is but a small portion of the life we yet have to live), when we find the sons of Emilius Lepidus—who had been Consul three times—en-

tertaining the people in the forum with a show which lasted three days, during which twenty-two gladiators fought, the majority of whom were killed. In the year 200 B. C., and on several occasions intervening between that date and the year 182 B. C., Valerius Lævinus exhibits as many as twenty-five pairs at once; and, in the eighth year after the last-named date, he caused seventy-four gladiators to entertain the people with their barbarous butchery. The populace became so fond of these bloody entertainments in the course of time that not only the friends of every wealthy citizen lately deceased, but also all the public magistrates, presented them with shows of this nature for the purpose of procuring their regard and applause. For nearly two hundred years, the *Ædiles*, *Prætors*, *Consuls*, and especially the candidates for office, ingratiated themselves into the favor of the people in this way. The expense was usually borne by the public treasury, but it was frequently paid from their own private purse. As these shows become grander, and at the same time more bloody, amphitheaters come into use. Let us visit one, through permission, while no entertainment is being given. We find a very large wooden building of elliptical form, three stories high. On the outside the timbers are very heavy, as the weight inside to be supported when

the building is filled is immense. Within is a large and spacious area called the *arena*. Around this rows of seats are constructed one above another, receding backward toward the top. At one extremity is a raised platform highly decorated, and covered with luxurious seats for Senators and dignitaries. The building is unroofed, except that a large canvas is stretched across, attached to masts or spars that rise uprightly from the tops of the walls. The arena is inclosed by a wall of timbers, in which sharp iron spikes are driven, so that the wild beasts, recently introduced into these shows, might not climb up to the seats above. In this wall, at regular intervals, are massive doors made with bars of iron. Upon looking into one we are saluted by the growl of a huge lion who paces his cell to and fro. His natural fierceness has increased from the pangs of hunger. We are permitted to enter another door, which leads to the School of the Gladiators. Here they are trained to fight as to a profession. In a large room are a great number of fierce, stalwart men, whose muscular strength is more like that of the lion we saw in his den than that of men. Their master is with them. In the center of the room are two of these giants, clad in armor, fighting with foils or wooden swords. The master himself is also clad like them, and occasionally assumes



GLADIATORS IN TRAINING.

the place of one of the combatants in order to teach them some particular movement or strike with the sword. Their modes of fighting are various. Some fight blindfolded, in chariots or on horseback—a dreadfully awkward and uncertain way. Another mode of fighting is in troops of equal numbers, where they fight as a body a regular battle. A third way is in complete armor of helmet, buckler, shield, and short sword or poniard. A fourth is to match a full-clad gladiator against one without armor, armed only with a three-pointed lance or trident, and a large net with which he endeavors to entangle his antagonist by throwing it over his head. In case he should miss his aim, he immediately takes to flight in order that he may re-adjust his net for a second cast.

The masters of the gladiators make them all swear that they will fight until death; and, if they are unsuccessful in the fight, they are put to death, either by the sword of the victor, or, if it is thought they are cowardly and desire to violate their oath, they are put to death by fire or clubs, or by whipping. It is considered a crime for the poor wretches to complain when they are wounded, or even to ask for death. They are expected to face it with the coolest, unflinching heroism when overcome. It is, however, usual for


the Emperor, or people, to grant them life when they evince no signs of fear, but await the fatal stroke with courage and intrepidity. This grant of life is usually given by a sign generally made with the hands; but Rome has become so blood-thirsty from familiarity with such scenes as to have lost much of her former mercy, and it is sad indeed that, when many a luckless combatant who is exhausted with fatigue and faint from wounds, implores the mercy of his adversary, too often the theater resounds with the cries of the frantic spectators, "Let him receive the sword!" and their sanguinary sentence is instantly sealed in the blood of the wretched suppliant. Valor is never wanting upon these occasions; the gladiator is even taught to fall gracefully when he receives the mortal stroke. Besides, he endeavors to express no sense of pain or solicitude. If we can learn no more from them, or find nothing else in them to admire it is their unflinching courage and constancy.





CHAPTER III.

SPARTACUS; OR, THE GLADIATORIAL WAR.

PON the mountain side, near the waters of the Danube, in the heroic land of Thracia, dwelt one of the princes of that race of noble warriors, and now shepherds, who had sprung originally from Grecian ancestors. The same blood still flowed in their veins, and the same spirit still prompted them to daring action. This prince had a son just in the vigor of his boyhood. A noble youth indeed was Spartacus. Daily he led forth his father's sheep upon the mountain side, through narrow passes and over the craggy rocks, for whose familiar faces he had formed such an attachment. It was upon these vine-clad hills he spent the days of his peaceful boyhood. At noon, with the son of a neighbor whom he loved as a brother, he sat under the shade of some native arbor while the sheep rested at their feet. There they sat and sang and played

upon the flute the airs of freedom and their fatherland. The two shepherd boys were almost wed to each other by those bonds of youthful affection which are of all the purest and most lasting. Often, at night, Spartacus sat and listened to the tales of ancient wars told by his venerable grandfather; and, one night in particular, as he listened to the old man's stirring narrative, in which he told of Marathon and Leuctra, the heart of the boy beat fast, and the hot blood that ran to his cheek told of the fire that had been kindled within. It was not until his mother had brushed the heavy locks from his forehead, and bade him forget these cruel tales of bloody war, that he consented to retire. That very night the Romans landed on those shores. The sword and torch devastated those green hills, and the friend and companion of Spartacus was carried away captive. The bold Thracians courageously resisted the invading army, and by their unequalled valor, with the advantage of their mountain fastnesses, repelled the Romans for a time; and it was not until some few years later that they were entirely subdued. In the mean time, our gentle shepherd youth had grown up to a gigantic manhood. The daughter of the neighbor had taken the place of her brother and become the wife of Spartacus, who had married her, partly to protect her from the enemy,

but more especially because he loved her, both for her own sake and her brother's. Finally, their brave army was overwhelmed by the Roman legions, and our hero and his wife carried captive to the Imperial City. One day, while on exhibition in the forum for sale, he fell asleep and a huge serpent, to the surprise and terror of by-standers, came and twined itself around his face, but loosened its hold again without injuring him. His wife then said that it was a sign that he would rise to something very great and formidable, the result of which would be happy. He was finally bought by a man named Lentulus Batiatus, living at Capua, who kept a great number of gladiators, who were mostly Gauls and Thracians. There Spartacus was put in training, and for twelve years slew every man and beast the empire could furnish to contend with him in the arena.

It is the year 71 B. C. Lentulus, the Consul, is returning with triumphant legions from Rome to Capua, the principal city of Campania. Suppose we visit it. Upon passing up the street we see show-bills painted in brilliant colors, representing the arena, and wild beasts, and gladiators. Uppermost and in the largest letters is the name of Spartacus, who will also appear. Let us hasten thither. Upon our arrival, we find the amphitheater filled from top to bottom, row upon row of

anxious and excited faces waiting to see the chief of gladiators, who will soon be brought forth. Several combats have already taken place, and the white sand in the arena is stained with blood. At one extremity, in an elevated position, is seated the Consul and his officers. We are not required to wait long before a door is opened, and a gigantic form is ushered forth clad in complete armor. The visor of his helmet is thrown up, and we behold a face so noble, so self-possessed, that we can not but remember that it was not always used to such scenes of horror. But what a form! a complete giant indeed, yet, while so large, he is the perfect statue. While he possesses the strength of ancient Hercules, he is at the same time as elegant and graceful as Apollo. His broad chest, his sinewy arms, and symmetrical limbs are all that an artist could desire for a model.

But while we are looking at our hero our attention is attracted by the opening of an iron door that grates heavily upon its hinges. A huge African lion bounds forth, uttering a terrible growl. At sight of the spectators he stops, half bewildered by the scene. Then he discovers the gladiator in the arena. Slowly he strides away, as if he had not discovered him at all; but swordsman and beast are eyeing each other with

equal vigilance. The lion at last turns full face upon the man, puts his head to the ground, throws up his shaggy mane, and utters a roar that shakes every timber in the amphitheater; then, with a measured pace and head down, walks toward Spartacus, who stands holding his sword as calmly and as unmoved as though it were only a cat that was coming toward him. Still we can see his dark eye flash fire, as he brandishes his blade and clinches it more firmly in his hand. At last the beast crouches, and, with a tremendous spring, lights fairly upon the sword of the gladiator. It has pierced his heart, and, with a roar equal to the first, he falls back upon the sand; but, being a monster of his kind, and possessing wonderful strength, he rises in a mighty death-struggle, foaming and bleeding, and rushes again at his antagonist, only to receive the steel to its hilt, and be freed from his pain. Shout upon shout fills the amphitheater, and shakes its walls, as had the roar of the lion a few moments before.

But Spartacus was not allowed to retire yet—this was a grand triumphal day, and the people must see more blood; and nothing would please them more than to see that of this brave Thracian, who had for so many years been unconquerable. The previous day a gladiator of great strength,

a Thracian also, who had laid low many a man and beast in the Roman amphitheater, had been brought to Capua for this occasion. Spartacus, somewhat wearied, was reclining upon the ground, adjusting his armor and wiping his bloody sword. He had no sooner completed this, and closed his helmet, than this strange gladiator is led into the arena. He is altogether unknown to Spartacus, who immediately arises and challenges him by extending his little finger, which is the custom. They are well matched indeed ; both giants, and one would scarcely know which of them is the better of the two. At the signal they strike. Louder and louder their heavy swords ring upon their shields ; their polished armor shines brightly in the rays of sunlight that now and then darts in under the canvas awning. Cheer upon cheer arises from the wild multitude as they behold some daring and dexterous movement. It is almost an even fight. Spartacus never met such an antagonist before. Little did he know that he with whom he fought was a Thracian ; but finally growing desperate, and with the strength of a Samson, he drove his ponderous blade through the breast-plate, and through the ribs and heart of his strange enemy, who fell dying on the sand. Spartacus broke his helmet-clasps and threw his visor up. The dying man looked into his face

and smiled—such a smile as had illumined his face often as he sat with him who had slain him under the olive-tree, and played upon the shepherd's flute the notes of peace. It was the same smile still—and thus he died.

Our hero started back, and, with a loud cry of grief, that almost rent the sky, he fell upon his face beside his dead friend, sobbing like a child. Fast did the tears course down those rugged cheeks as he remembered the green mountain-side and the home of his youth, how he and his companion had climbed them together. Beautiful Thracia, that was once free, was free no more, and the friend whom he had loved best he had slain with his own hand. It was not until the Prætor, with stern and commanding voice, ordered him away, that he arose. He begged that he might take his friend's body and burn it upon the funeral pile, and, dropping upon his knees, he begged, but the cruel and unfeeling officer disdained to hear his prayer, and only said, "No, let it rot!" Spartacus was led to his quarters, the show ended, the people disperse, and we retire with them.

But let us look into what transpired in the amphitheater after we have gone, and follow Spartacus in his future history. The strange Thracian, with the beasts and other gladiators, who had

been slain in that day's slaughter, had been hauled away and thrown into a large pit dug for the purpose at some distance from the city. The lights of the busy city had been put out. All was dark in the house of Lentulus. The pale moon looked sadly down upon the bloody arena, and not a sound was heard save the occasional roar of some wild beast, as he grew furious in his den from want of food. In the large training hall of the amphitheater two hundred gladiators were lounging. Their muscles were yet knotted from the fierceness of the battle they had withstood the previous day; and as they sat and talked of its bloodshed and carnage, Spartacus, like a giant, arose in their midst, and, with the eloquence of his Greek forefathers, told them of his grief, and how the Prætor had wronged him. He spoke of the days of his innocence, when he was a shepherd boy. He warned them that some of their limbs would make a dainty feast on the morrow for the hungry lion that was roaring yonder in his den. If they *must* die, why not die for themselves, under the blue sky and by the bright waters? The same spirit that actuated Spartacus soon spread like a hot fever through the veins of those stern men, and they girded on their swords, and followed their leader and his wife, who was still weeping for her brother. They

struck down the sentinel, but another, who was near by, escaped before they could reach him, and aroused the cohort of soldiers, who immediately rushed to the narrow door-way, through which they passed, and only seventy of the two hundred made their escape. They immediately made their way to Mount Vesuvius, where they found a safe retreat. From this point they extended their devastations over all the adjacent country. Spartacus was determined to make Italy pay for the innocent blood she had caused him to shed during those twelve long years. In their hiding places on the mountain they were joined by multitudes of slaves, who came determined to die for freedom rather than to live in bondage.

They had not remained there long when, one morning as they looked from their lofty retreat, they saw the Prætor of Capua and the cohort that had prevented the escape of the remainder of the gladiators. This was the same haughty officer who had so cruelly refused the request of Spartacus that he might burn the body of his friend. At this sight the old fire was kindled in his bosom, and with his trusty and brave followers, only half armed as they were, he rushed down the mountain and met the Prætor in open battle upon the plain. Spartacus stood in the

front rank, and hewed a passage so near the haughty and cowardly officer that the Romans took flight, leaving most of their armor and a great many of their soldiers upon the field. The fame of this victory spread far and wide, and gladiators, and pirates, and slaves flocked to them from all quarters. They now threw away their weapons, which were those of gladiators, as being dishonorable and barbarous, and seized and wore with great satisfaction the arms that had been left upon the field. Instead of a miserable band of rovers, the gladiators were a band of noble, virtuous men, who fought for freedom; and all that Spartacus desired was to reach the Alps and disperse his men to their respective homes in Gaul, and Germany, and Thrace.

After this battle they encamped on a high hill, covered with wild vines. While here Clodius, the Prætor, was sent against them from Rome, with three thousand men. He besieged them, and placed a strong guard at the only place where an ascent could be made. This was very narrow, and it was impossible for them to descend while it was guarded by soldiers. Upon the opposite side of the hill was a steep precipice, which was also covered with wild vines. The fugitives cut off such of the branches as they could use, and made a ladder, which was sufficiently strong and

long enough to reach to the plain below. Down this they all descended in safety, and the last man on the hill let down their arms, and then descended after the rest. This was all unknown to the Romans, and the gladiators soon took them by surprise, by attacking them suddenly in the rear. They immediately fled in confusion, and Spartacus took possession of the camp, and armor, and spoils. At this point he was joined by all the shepherds and herdsmen in the country, men of great vigor, and remarkably swift of foot. Part of these he clad in heavy armor, and the rest he made light-armed soldiers, who should serve as scouting parties.

Soon after this the General Varinus was sent against the gladiators. They met his lieutenant and two thousand men, and routed them. Cossinius was then appointed assistant and chief counselor of Varinus, and marched against Spartacus with a large army, but the hero was so vigilant that he came very near taking Cossinius while he was bathing at Salenæ. He barely escaped with his life. The gladiators seized all his baggage, and pursued him to his camp, which they took, and when he ventured to engage them in battle he himself, and great numbers of his army, were slain; and when Varinus, the General himself, appeared against them, he was

beaten in several battles, and Spartacus took the very horse he rode. At this time the number of the brave gladiatorial army was swelled to a host of seventy thousand men, and they the bravest men that Italy could furnish. Still their heroic leader was not puffed up, nor elated by his success. He was moderate, and refrained from doing any thing more than was necessary for the sake of liberty. He possessed a wonderful dignity of mind, a discernment and generalship which is rarely the gift of nature. O that all had the zeal of Spartacus in every good cause!





CHAPTER IV.

SPARTACUS AND THE JEWISH GLADIATOR.

THE vast army Spartacus had gathered around him was of a far different disposition from that possessed by their brave yet moderate leader. They, relying on their numbers, and elated with success, would not listen to his humane and merciful proposals, but laid all Italy waste as far as they traversed it. His entire army was made up of the bravest and most daring men in the Roman Empire, but their dispositions and inclinations were as diverse, and their characters as different as their several faces. Side by side stood the murderer and the peaceable shepherd. To control such an army of undisciplined men required an extraordinary amount of military genius. The constant anxiety of Spartacus was that he might secure the safety and freedom of his followers, while their aspirations were not only those of freedom, but their

extravagant desire was that of sacking Rome and breaking her power.

At the first escape of the gladiators, and at their first victories, the Senate was highly indignant as well as ashamed of their soldiery ; but now, instead of feeling shame for their supposed disgrace, fear and danger afflicted them. They realized that it was the most difficult and important war they ever had upon their hands. Both the Consuls were engaged in it. One of them, Gelius by name, surprised a considerable body of Germans, who had rashly encamped themselves at some distance from the troops of Spartacus. These he overcame and cruelly put to the sword. Lentulus, the other Consul, with a very large army, attempted to surround the gladiatorial army ; but Spartacus, with his usual heroism, met him in the open field, defeated his lieutenants, and captured their baggage. They then endeavored to reach the Alps, which was the only wish and desire of Spartacus. Cassius, the commander of Gaul on the river Po, marched at the head of an army of ten thousand men to meet them ; but his defeat was so signal that he lost most of his army, and escaped himself with great difficulty.

The Senate was so indignant at these proceedings that they severely reprimanded the Consuls,

and deprived them of their offices. Crassus, the wealthiest man in Italy, was selected and promoted to the chief command. Numbers of the nobility volunteered to serve under him as officers. With a vast army he marched to Picenum, and awaited the advance of Spartacus. In the mean time, he sent his lieutenant, Mummius, with two legions, to follow the enemy, but not to undertake a battle at any hazard. Contrary to command, he attacked Spartacus and was completely routed. Many fell upon the field, and the remainder threw away their arms and fled. So enraged was Crassus that he reprimanded Mummius severely, and, drawing out five hundred of the most cowardly of his men put every tenth man to death, just as the lot happened to fall to them. This made a dreadful spectacle in the presence of that great army, and was a lesson that they did not forget when they were again taken into action.

Spartacus, after this, turned back and came to the sea-coast, where he found the ships of a great number of Sicilian pirates. These he paid a handsome sum to take himself and two thousand of his men to Sicily, where he hoped to rekindle a rebellion that had lately been smothered. They, however, first got possession of his money and then sailed away without him. He, thus deceived, retired, and intrenched himself in the extreme

southern Peninsula of Italy. Here Crassus followed him, and dug a trench across the isthmus, a distance of thirty-seven and one-half miles. This was fifteen feet wide, and the same in depth. With the earth taken out of it, he made also a brick wall, extending from sea to sea. Spartacus only laughed at the undertaking; but, when his supplies began to fail, and the peninsula was exhausted, he filled up a place in the trench during a snowy and tempestuous night, and succeeded in escaping with a third part of his army. Crassus followed suit, and the remaining two-thirds were enabled to escape also. Spartacus, indeed, showed his superior generalship, and Crassus dispatched a messenger to Rome, telling the Senate it would be necessary to recall Lucullus from Thrace and the great Pompey from Spain. He already feared that the enemy, elated with success, would march immediately upon Rome. A little dissatisfaction had arisen in the camp of the gladiators, and a portion of them separated and encamped on the Lucanian lake. Crassus fell upon these, and would have slain them in their retreat had not the brave and magnanimous Spartacus, whom they had so recently forsaken, appeared and rescued them.

Burning with shame and self-reproach, as well as jealousy for his own reputation, Crassus deter-

mined again to attack the revolting troops ; so he sent six thousand men ahead to take possession of an eminence. They were discovered, however, by two of the women from the gladiators' camp, and would have met their fate had not Crassus himself come up and attacked the entire army of fugitives. This was the hottest battle of the war. Both generals were equally determined, and the soldiers of freedom fought and fell in their places with such a calm yet desperate determination that twelve thousand and three hundred died in their ranks after the bravest exertions of valor, and what is most remarkable, only two of this great number were found wounded in the back. This was the first defeat that Spartacus had sustained in his victorious career. A severe stroke it was to him, and sadly indeed he retired to the mountains of Petelia.

On his way thither, the Roman Quæstor, and one of Crassus's officers, followed to harass them in their retreat ; but the brave fugitives, like lions at bay, turned upon their pursuers, and slaughtered them fearfully. They fled in a dastardly manner, and were scarcely able to carry away the Quæstor, who was wounded. The success of this battle proved the union of the gladiators. It gave them fresh spirits, and they would no longer defer a decisive action. With swords in their

hands they met their leaders on the road, and insisted on marching against Crassus and the whole Roman army.

Far the opposite to this ambition were the feelings of Spartacus. Standing on a high peak, with a few of his faithful followers, he deplored his exile, and, in his generous manner, the devastations that war had spread over all the land. His thoughts ran back to his native land, and the poet has put these words into his mouth :

“In my green youth I looked
From the same frosty peak where now I stand,
And there beheld the glory of those lands,
Where peace was tinkling on the shepherd’s bell,
And singing with the reapers.”

But the end of Spartacus’s career was nigh at hand, for his rash and excited followers forced him to engage in pitched battle the almost innumerable hosts of their enemies. Crassus encamped very near them, and one day, when he had ordered his men to dig a trench, that part of the gladiatorial army lying nearest to them made an attack. Others soon rushed to their support, and Spartacus, seeing the great necessity, drew out his whole army. His undaunted courage was not wanting in this action ; but, with the same spirit that nerved him in the arena, he went forth. It was now only made holy in the cause for which he

fought. As he alighted in front of his army, he plunged his sword into his horse. "If I conquer," said he, "I shall have horses enough; if I am vanquished, I shall have no need of them." With a shout for freedom, he precipitated himself into the thickest battalions of the enemy, followed by his faithful adherents; but his unequalled strength and valor soon left him alone, completely surrounded by Romans. His only desire was to reach Crassus. In this he did not succeed; but he killed, in terrible combat, with his own hands, two centurions, who ventured to engage him. Through showers of darts and heaps of slain he hewed his way, determined on victory or death. At last, receiving a wound in the leg, he was compelled to fall on his knees; yet he fought on, covering himself with his buckler in one hand, and wielding death blows on all sides with his sword in the other. When, at last, he fell, covered with wounds, it was upon a heap of Romans whom he had slain.

Thus ended the last combat of the noble Spartacus. The prediction of his wife, that he would "rise to something very great and formidable, the result of which would be happy," was truly fulfilled; for his end was happy for a gladiator. He fell fighting gallantly at the head of an army that was battling for freedom. His grand example was

followed by his adherents, forty thousand of whom were slain. Six thousand were taken prisoners and crucified alive, and five thousand who escaped were encountered by Pompey, who was coming to the support of Crassus. After a feeble resistance, they were put to the sword. Thus ended the gladiatorial war. None of this brave army, originally consisting of seventy thousand men, found freedom, but all found liberty in death.

Now, let us step forward again about seventy years, and when we have succeeded in making that little stride, we find the world enjoying a universal peace, the second time only in its history. At Rome we find the temple of Janus, which is always open when there is war, and closed in peace, now closed for the second time in seven hundred years. But our present field of observation, instead of being at Rome, is at Jerusalem. The object of our visit is to notice the life and character of a strange gladiator, who has just made his appearance there. His mode of fighting is so different from all others that he has attracted the attention of all Judea. Still he claims to be a gladiator. Perhaps we had better know what the word really means, as we have not defined it thus far. It is derived from the Latin *gladius*, meaning a sword. It is said that a man who lived by the river Jordan foretold the

coming of this notable, as well as wonderful swordsman, for we have just seen that a gladiator is one using or fighting with a sword; and, what is strange, this foreteller of events attracted all Judea to him. It was not his learning that they went to listen to, for he was unlearned, yet possessed this strange knowledge of the future. It was not his wealth they went to see, for he was poor. His dress was a sheep-skin and a girdle, his house a cave, and his food locusts and wild honey. One day, while he was talking to a large multitude by the side of the river, he pointed out this great gladiator, who happened to come down to the water through a by-path that led to the river's bank. He, like the wife of Spartacus, said he would rise to something great and formidable, the result of which would not only be happy for himself, but for all others.

Perhaps, after we have observed this *great* man's life for a while, we will know better where and why he calls himself a gladiator. It is said that he went into the wilderness, and was attacked by the evil spirits from the lower world, and that after a dreadful combat, which lasted forty days, he alone signally routed Lucifer, their chief and leader, who ventured to engage him in single combat. Lucifer was no ordinary antagonist. He had once been an archangel in the world of the

Celestials, but envy and greed for power induced him to raise a rebellion against the Eternal One, who sat upon the throne. His army, which consisted of a third part of the Immortals, was overthrown, and expelled from their happy abode, and, as a special punishment, he himself was cast down, as lightning, from heaven.

It is said of this gladiator, that when only a child his mother took him into the great temple, and there an old Jew came and took him in his arms and blessed him, and said to his mother, "Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against, (yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also,) that the thoughts of many may be revealed."*

While addressing a multitude of people on a certain occasion this stranger proclaimed himself, that "he came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword."† By this very announcement he laid claim to the title we have ascribed to him. His mode of fighting, however, was different from that of Spartacus. Instead of maiming men, he made the lame to walk; instead of killing them, he restored them to life. Instead of impoverishing the land in which he lived he enriched it; instead of raising a rebellion, and endeavoring to

* Luke ii, 34, 35.

† Matt. x, 34.

destroy the Roman power, he acknowledged it, and bade them to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Instead of exalting himself he exalted others. He was the friend of the widow and the orphan. He wept with them that weep, and rejoiced with them that rejoice. Another notable fact is that he was a king, and the first king who ever became a gladiator. His sword was "the sword of the Spirit, which was the Word of God."* That sword far surpassed in keenness any that had ever been used before; "for the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."† This king was also an instructor of gladiators, for he was known to drill twelve chosen men for three years in a school of gladiatorial combat. The king was not merely a gladiator who conquered sometimes, and was beaten at other times, but he was a conqueror in the literal sense. By his word, which was his only sword, he subdued all things. In the streets of the Holy City, and surrounding towns, we find him curing the sick, restoring the sight, healing the lame, and casting out evil spirits, all by his word. The elements obey him equally well.

* Phil. vi, 17.

† Heb. iv, 12.

At his command, on the Sea of Galilee the winds and waves stood still. We find him in the little town of Bethany, kneeling, with two weeping women, by the side of their brother's sepulcher; then, by his word, he commands the man who had been dead four days to come forth, and he is obeyed. We wonder at him restoring sight by mere word of mouth; but could not he who ages before had said, "Let there be light," say the same again with the same effect upon the darkened eyeball of one of his creatures?

He said his "kingdom was not of this world;" and we are told that, while he was rich, yet he, for our sakes, became poor. His character was so different from that of the princes of the neighboring countries; so different from that of the Roman Emperors, that men could not help but claim him indeed for their king.

His principal gladiatorial combats were against the sins of the world, and especially with Lucifer, who first attacked him. The second engagement that we hear of his having with this fallen archangel is in a garden near Jerusalem. There he fought all night, and so great was the exertion that the sweat ran off his body in great drops of blood. Before this last engagement, he told the gladiators whom he was training that "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good

cheer: I have overcome the world."* Finally, when he had about completed his conquest, he was taken out and crucified; but, in his death, he was far bolder and more heroic than Spartacus—as much more so as his life and undertaking had been more successful than that of the Thracian we admired so much. Instead of wreaking his vengeance upon his enemies, whom he could have destroyed by a word, he only said: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do;" but in this last combat he bruised the head of Lucifer and overcame him forever. Truly, the prophecy of the old Jew in the temple, that he would rise to something great and formidable, the result of which would be happy for himself and others, was fulfilled; for, by his death, we received pardon for all our sins.

He had only one more combat, and that was with death. He fought with him three days, and at last overcame him, and broke the king's seal that imprisoned him, and escaped from a body of Roman soldiers who guarded him, and then he ascended to his Father to intercede for us.

Now, my dear reader, this gladiator, who was none other than God himself, is as willing to save us as he was those old Jews who crucified him. He is as ready to illumine our hearts as he was to

* John xvi, 33.


give light to the eyes of the blind man. Their sins are ours ; their hell is ours ; their heaven is ours. Which shall we choose for our deliverer, Jesus or Spartacus, Christ or Lucifer ?





CHAPTER V.

GLADIATORIAL SHOWS OF NERO.

E will only take a passing glance at the development of our subject until we come to the reign of that monster of cruelty, Nero. Gladiatorial shows were fast becoming the only popular amusement, and some of the Emperors found it necessary to put them under restrictions, while others, who were careless as to the public good, and deaf to humanity and mercy, increased them, of course. As the number of these combats increased, the number of combatants increased also. Julius Cæsar, in his Ædileship, entertained the people with an exhibition of three hundred and twenty couples. After this, we have the comparatively pacific reign of Augustus. This great monarch, who was moderate in his general policy, decreed that only two shows of gladiators a year should be presented, in each of which there should not be above sixty couples of combatants.

Tiberius provided, by an order of the Senate, that no one should have the privilege of exhibiting such a show, unless he was worth four hundred thousand sesterces, equal to about fifteen thousand, two hundred dollars.

In the reign of the weak Claudius, the populace had reached the height, almost, of corruption. The census showed the citizenship of the city to number six millions and a half. All former decrees, at this time, were annulled, and private persons were allowed to exhibit these brutal combats at pleasure. Some even carried this sanguinary satisfaction so far as to have them at their private feasts. A real mania for gladiatorial shows had seized the public mind. From slaves and freedmen, the inhuman sport at length spread to people of rank and nobility; so that during the reign of Augustus it was found necessary to issue an edict forbidding any of the Senatorial order from becoming gladiators. The Emperor soon after placed the same restrictions upon the knights.

In the fifty-fourth year of the Christian era, we are at Rome. Nero, the heir to the throne, is invested with the imperial purple. At first he promises a just and peaceful reign, and the people look forward to it with the most pleasing anticipations; but sad indeed is their disappointment. Never has the cup of iniquity been filled in the



THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATER.

life of any man if not in that of Nero. His name, ere he has reigned three years, has become the synonym for cruelty. In him, the sum of all that is wicked, profligate, and sanguinary under the sun is completed. The mention of his name is the terror of Rome. As master of the world, the lives of his subjects are at his disposal. The noblest of the patrician order were the unfortunate victims of his jealousy, as well as the meanest barbarian. We would not dare, my reader, to visit the worst of his shows. By him all laws relating to gladiators were abolished, and the only law in Rome, whether in respect to this or any other institution, was only the result of his caprice or passion. On one occasion, Nero brought forty Senators and sixty knights into the arena as gladiators. His infamy did not stop here, but he obliged *women* of quality and nobility to fight as gladiators in the public arena.

Let us, however, visit the amphitheater. Myriads of human beings are crowded into that enormous building. At the extreme end sits Nero in state. At the sound of the trumpet, two chariots or cars, drawn by horses, are driven in. In each are two men—one a driver, and the other a gladiator. They are driven side by side, and, at the signal, the combat begins. The cars are kept in motion, each charioteer showing his dexterity in

affording every advantage of movement and position for his swordsman. It is the place of the combatant to protect his driver, as well as himself, from the blows of his antagonist. This is done mostly by covering him with his shield, while he wards off the blows that are directed at his own person by wary movements of his sword. Finally, a tremendous shout of acclamation goes up, as one of the combatants receives the steel and falls backward from his car, faint and bleeding, upon the sand. His antagonist springs to the ground, lifts his sword for the fatal blow. The wounded man pleads for his life from the heartless people and Emperor in vain, and is dispatched amid the demonstrations of delight that come from the savage Nero.

Next appears a body of one hundred gladiators, who divide themselves into two equal parties, and form a line of battle. At the signal, this miniature army presents us all the fearful and bloody scenes of a regular engagement. They charge, and each selects his antagonist. It is not until many have been killed, and every man on the weakest side wounded, that the carnage is brought to a close. The arena is then cleared; the wounded are carried to their quarters, and attendants with long hooks, which they stick into the dead bodies of the gladiators, drag them to the

stripping room, where their armor is taken off, and they thrown into a heap at one side to be hauled away for interment.

Our attention is attracted by the entrance of a man, unarmed except with a short sword. He takes his position in the center of the arena. His muscular development is as fine as that of any who ever fought in that amphitheater. In stature tall, with broad shoulders, his limbs appear to have been cast in some colossal mold. His long, yellow hair falls in masses on his shoulders. His face is that of a warrior. There is nothing in it that gives trace of the effeminacy of civilization. His calm self-possession has a degree of dignity about it that indicates a formidable and ruling spirit. He is a Briton, and was captured by the Roman army, which had just overcome that land of the North. He was one of their leaders, and had always been used to savage warfare, and encounters with the beasts of the forest. He had been in training for some time, and promised to prove one of the best gladiators of Rome. In fact the whole city was already excited about him.

The creak of iron gratings, and the terrible roar of a tiger, as he bounds from his den, startles all of us. It is days since he tasted food, and, raving with hunger, he looks around for a moment, then,

with a desperation such as arises only from want of food, he rushes at the Briton, whom he has just discovered. First he crouches like a huge cat, but is so enormous as to terrify the audience. With all the ferocity that hunger has added to his savage nature, he makes a spring directly at the gladiator; but with wonderful agility he steps to one side, and strikes a blow with his short sword that sends it to the heart of the beast. With a groan of agony the monster falls back dead upon the sand.

The shouts of applause had scarce died away, and the body of the tiger been removed, when the creaking of another iron door, and the appearance of another monster, attracts the attention of all. It is a lion so remarkable in size as to have been the terror of all the gladiators for some time. Long had he been reserved for some powerful antagonist. The pangs of hunger were as severe in his case as in that of the tiger, but his nature was much more like that of a man under similar circumstances. His manner was more deliberate, and at the same time more terrible. With a quick, yet measured pace, he took a general survey of the arena, when, suddenly turning, he uttered such a roar as would have shaken the Numidian forests for many a mile. In the presence of all this the gladiator stood firm; his

nerves failed him not, but with a look that caused the fiery eye of the beast to drop, he gazed on his shaggy antagonist. The lion was twice the size of the tiger, and the Briton looked as but a mouthful for his powerful jaws.

The terrible bound came at last, and with the same dexterous movement as before, the gladiator avoided his enemy, and struck with the same precision; but, instead of reaching the heart, the sword had struck a rib, and fell from his hand. Time and again did the lion bound at him, enraged by the wound he had received. Our brave Briton, however, was not yet to be overcome, and at length regaining his sword, plunged it into the heart of the beast, who, after several struggles, fell dead at the door of his den. Exhausted and nervous, the Briton rested his weary limbs upon the sand. Cheer upon cheer went up from the delighted audience, and the more delighted Emperor clapped his hands with wild excitement.

The effect of that terrible combat was plainly observable on the Briton. His whole frame shook from the exertion he had just put forth. But the cruel tyrant, Nero, knew no mercy. The attendants led forth a gladiator, clad in full armor, with a sword in his hand, and, at the same time, threw a net and trident to the Briton. An expression of sadness and disappointment came over his

face—a third engagement had not been expected. He seemed to lose all hope, but slowly rose and took the net and trident. His antagonist was an African, as strong and well built as himself, and equally active. We are forced to express our indignation at the Emperor for his heartlessness. O, Nero! have you forgotten all humanity, all justice, all fairness, in matching a fresh antagonist against a man who has sustained two such dreadful encounters as these? In the first place he would have been an equal match for our brave Briton; but now you send a gladiator who is fresh and well armed to contend with one who is weary and unarmed. The Briton advances, meets his enemy, casts his net, with which he hoped to entangle him, but it missed. The Briton then took to flight, in order to re-adjust his net for a second cast. He ran slowly; the African, who was fresh, gained on him at every step. At last the Briton turned to throw again, when the African plunged his sword into his side. The Briton threw up his hand and sank back upon the ground. The victor stood over him with uplifted sword, waiting for the tumultuous applause to cease in order that he might receive the signal of life or death from the spectators. Life was the answer given by their hands, and the attendants bore the wounded gladiator to his quarters.

We are told by the unknown author of that admirable work, "Helena's Household," that a child, the son of Labio, a Roman General, who commanded a legion in Britain, and was present at the show, induced his father to care for the wants of the wounded man, and when he was able to be removed, took him to his own villa. When entirely well, he became the attendant of the young son, whose name was Marcus, to whom he was so attached that he could not bear to be separated from him. His native name was Galdus. He soon learned the Roman tongue, and proved a faithful servant in his benefactor's household. Marcus talked to him about the love of our Savior, and tried to point him to Jesus. At the burning of Rome, of which we shall speak in our next chapter, Labio's house was consumed, and his son would have perished, notwithstanding all his efforts to rescue him, had not Galdus rushed into the flames, climbed the long columns of the porticoes and descended again with his precious burden safe to the ground. He himself had been badly scorched, and it was several weeks before he recovered. When he had become entirely well Labio set him at liberty, but he refused to leave his master.

In the course of a few years Labio again returned to Britain, to take command of a legion.

This time he took his wife, and Marcus, and Galdus. Soon after his arrival Marcus and his mother both died. Galdus was inconsolable. Labio could not bear to remain where he had lost his wife and child, but forsook Britain for the war in Judea. Galdus being free, remained behind, and made his way through the Northern tribes, not stopping until he reached those far up in Caledonia, where the Romans had not yet penetrated. There by his intelligence, and the superior advantages he had enjoyed at Rome, added to his hatred for the Romans, and love for his native land, he became a powerful chieftain. To him all the tribes gathered. He was their judge and their general. The natives called him in their own tongue, "Gald-cachach"—Gald, the fighter of battles. His fame spread to the Romans, and he was called Galgacus by them. He was successful at first against Agricola, their general, but, despite all his efforts, was finally vanquished. The fatal battle took place at the foot of the Grampian hills.

Our brave Caledonian monarch addressed his hardy troops before the battle with all his native eloquence, and to-day the speech of Galgacus stands as one of the grandest monuments of true patriotic sentiment, as well as eloquence, that we have on record. He reminded them that only

seas and rocks remained behind them, and here they must conquer or perish. It was a vain hope to disarm by submission the pride of the Romans, who termed spoil and slaughter *government*, and devastation *peace*. The brigands, under a woman, defeated their legions, and leveled their camps; and, had it not been for their relaxing into sloth, and their intoxication with success, they might forever have thrown off the yoke of servitude. Their example, he observed, ought to animate the Caledonians, who might justly esteem themselves the noblest of Britons.

“The temerity of our enemies,” exclaimed he, “has thrown them into our hands. A feeble band, they gaze with dismay on an unknown region, on our gloomy hills and wintry sky. One victory completes their destruction; their forts are without garrisons, their cities without concord, and, while the people are averse to obedience, the magistrates rule with injustice. Whether you shall swell the number of the oppressed, or avenge their wrongs, it is this field must determine. Prepare, therefore, for battle, and, as you advance, look back to the renown of your ancestors, and look forward to the independence of your posterity.”

The battle was terrible. Galgacus led his men nobly on, but they were undisciplined and un-

governable. They had really become frantic, and rushed like dumb beasts to the slaughter. Only three hundred and forty Romans were slain, while Galgacus lost ten thousand. The vanquished chieftain retired from the scene of action, forsook his tribes, and wandered to the South of Britain. He began to ponder the words of his young instructor in his heart. He found no peace in the world. He had lost all his spirit of revenge, all his thirst for power, and his rude, but generous nature, had been melted into love—love for Marcus, his former idol. He now sought peace in the sayings he had taught him, as he frequently visited his grave.

Labio, in the midst of the Judean war, had not forgotten the words spoken to him by his Christian son. After many a sleepless night, and many an hour of prayer, he had found that “peace that passeth all understanding.” He was determined to war no more, but to take up the work of his Master, and bear his cross, even in those hours of persecution, while Christians were being burned at the stake by scores.

With this intent he resigned his command, sold his property, and distributed it to the poor, and sailed for Britain. Never was he more surprised than when he found Galdus at the grave of his dear son Marcus. Galdus related his

experience, and prayed for light and consolation, and desired Labio to point him to Christ. The old Briton melted into tears as he heard the old, old story from the lips of one whom he thus loved. "Gald, *the fighter of battles*, was no more," but Gald, the preacher of the Gospel of peace, in company with Labio, proclaimed the love of a Savior to those Northern tribes, and told them of a Chieftain who would not only deliver them from their bondage, but would save them from their sins. Death came to both after they had "run well with patience the race of conflict that was set before them."





CHAPTER VI.

BURNING OF THE AMPHITHEATER.

ROME, with her seven millions, dwelling upon seven hills, had become the mistress of the world, of which Nero was master—and truly a hard master he proved to be. When his own mother, and his wife, became the victims of his tyranny, and, what was worse, were murdered at his command, what could the citizen hope for or expect? Was any thing too fiendish to be undertaken by such a man? No. And, as if he thought the people were in doubt on the subject, he took the opportunity to convince them of it to the utmost.

One night, in midsummer, Rome was startled by the fierce, loud cry of “fire! fire!” This was a common cry indeed in this great city; so common that it was scarcely ever heeded, except by those in the immediate vicinity of the danger. But this night the cry grew louder and louder,

until it rang from street to street and from hill to hill. The entire south-western part of the city was ablaze. The fire had first broken out at the great circus, and was now fast wending its way up the Aventine and Palatine hills, and from thence it swept on to the east. The roar of the flames could be distinctly heard at the most distant quarter. The air was full of flaming cinders, carried by the west wind that came up briskly from the sea; and, as they fell, new flames burst up with all the terror of the first. The great drought had made every thing wooden highly combustible, and the height of the buildings offered every advantage to the impending conflagration. The panic was so general that no efforts were made to check the fire. All that was thought of was personal safety. The crowded streets were one mass of living beings. All were wild with excitement. The shrieks of children who had lost their parents were heart-rending. "Father" and "mother" were the cries that went up on every side. Crushed and trampled under foot, the poor, pitiable innocents found no one to rescue them. All night it raged, and the sufferers cried, "O, that it were day!" and, when day returned, their cry was only, "O, that it were night!"

During the first night, and the succeeding day, the fire had swept up the Palatine hill, and, at

evening, it rolled up against the amphitheater. Its dry timbers soon were ablaze, and the devourer scaled its walls, caught the awnings and spars, and then tossed a sheet of fire to the sky that illuminated the already brilliant city. With the same speed with which the fire ascended the outer wall it ran along the rows of benches, down, down, until it reached the arena below. The horror of the scene is indescribable. It seemed as if all Rome besides were in darkness, although on fire, while this tremendous structure burned. And, when the flames reached the vaults below and the out-buildings connected with the amphitheater, "then came a sound that gave greater horror to all who heard it; for it was something more terrible than any thing that had yet been heard. It was a sound of agony—the cry of living creatures left engaged to meet their fate—the wild beasts of the amphitheater. There was something almost human in that sharp, despairing wail of fear. The deep roar of the lion sounded above all other cries; but it was no longer the lordly roar of his majestic wrath; it was no longer the voice of the haughty king of animals. Terror destroyed all its menacing tones, and the approach of fire made his stout heart as craven as that of the timid hare. The roar of the lion sounded like a shriek, as it rose up and was borne on the blast

to the ears of men—a shriek of despair, a cry to heaven for pity on that life which the Creator had formed. With that lion's roar was blended the howl of the tiger and the yell of the hyena ; but all fierceness was mitigated in that hour of fright and dismay, and in the uproar of those shrieks there was something which made men's hearts quake, and caused them for a moment to turn aside from their own griefs and shudder at the agony of beasts.

“Here, where the flames raced and chased each other over the lofty arched side, and from which man had fled, and the only life that remained was heard and not seen, one form of life suddenly became visible to those who found occasion to watch this place, in which men saw that touch of nature which makes all men kin ; but here nature asserted her power in the heart of a lioness. How she escaped from her cell no one could say. Perhaps the heat had scorched the wood so that she broke it away ; perhaps she had torn away the side in her fury ; perhaps the side had burned away, and she had burst through the flames—doing this, not for herself, but for that offspring of hers which she carried in her mouth, holding it aloft, and, in her mighty maternal love, willing to devote herself to all danger for the sake of her young. She seemed to come up suddenly from

out of the midst of flame and smoke till she reached the farthest extremity of the edifice, and then she stood holding her cub, now regarding the approaching flames, and now looking around every-where for some further chance of escape.

“There stood, about thirty feet away, a kind of portico, which formed the front of a basilica, and this was the only building that was near. To this the lioness directed her gaze, and often turned to look upon the flames, and then returned again to inspect the portico. Its side stood nearest, and the sloping roof was the only place that afforded a foot-hold. Between these two places lay a depth of seventy feet, and, at the bottom, the hard stone pavement. Nearer and nearer came the flames, and the agony of a mother’s heart was seen in the beast as, with low, deep moans, she saw the fiery death that threatened. Already the flames seemed to encircle her, and the smoke-cloud drove down, hiding her at times from view. At length, one cloud, which had enveloped her for a longer period than usual, rolled away; the lioness seemed to hesitate no longer. Starting back to secure space for a run, she rushed forward and made a spring straight toward the portico.

“Perhaps, if the lioness had been alone and fresh in her strength, she might easily have accomplished the leap and secured, at least, temporary

safety. But she was wearied with former efforts, and the fire had already scorched her. Besides this, she held her cub in her mouth, and the additional weight bore her down. As it was, her forepaw struck the edge of the sloping roof of the portico. She clutched it madly with her sharp claws, and made violent efforts to drag herself up. She tried to catch at some foot-hold with her hind legs, but there was nothing. The tremendous strain of such a position could not long be endured. Gradually her efforts relaxed. At last, as if she felt herself falling, she made a final effort. Mustering all her strength, she seemed to throw herself upward, but in vain. She sank back, her limbs lost strength, her claws slipped from the place where they had held. The next instant, a dark form fell, and mother and offspring lay a lifeless mass on the pavement.”*

This scene, though heart-rending, was followed by one that might have been more so, were it not for the prowess exhibited by its hero. Apparently, all the wild beasts had perished in their cells, as well as some of the gladiators; but, fortunately for the sake of humanity, most of the latter had made their escape. But, while we look on and behold the fire as sole monarch, wielding

* An extract from the chapter on the *Burning of Rome*, in “*Helena’s Household*.”

its scepter of flame, a herd of wild beasts, who were confined in the most distant apartment, rush frantically through the red-hot coals, through the roaring flames, and the crash of falling timbers; scorched, and panting for one breath of cool air, they madly dash into the red-hot arena, and there, encircled by flame on every side, they have come only to endure a slower death than they would have endured in their dens. The roar and crackle of those dry timbers is only silenced in the mad cry of agony that arises from many a parched throat and blistered mouth in the arena. Doubly thankful are we that no human being is thus tortured; but, while our eye glances around the blazing ellipse, we are surprised to find that, at the extreme end, where the Emperor's seat is raised above those surrounding it, the fire has not yet extended, the probable reason being that a narrow stone stairway has checked the flames temporarily. But, as we strain our eyes through the light, we discover a form of something living. It certainly moved; and, as we look again, we are forced to cry to heaven for mercy, not for ourselves, but for that gladiator, who stands there like a statue awaiting his death more grandly than he ever could have found it in combat. He is an Ethiopian, tall, handsomely built, with a marked intelligence in his countenance. He is altogether naked, and,

as he surveys the scene of destruction, his countenance is as calm as if he beheld all from a point of safety. Yet, as he looks down upon the wild beasts, rushing to and fro, tearing the red-hot bars, snatching up fire-brands in their jaws, and then slaughtering each other in order to cool their parched tongues in the boiling blood, a look of pity came over that manly countenance. There was no concern for himself. Then, with a grace that an emperor could not have commanded, he seated himself in the imperial chair—an emperor indeed, nobler, braver, grander than ever reigned in Rome. His kingdom was before him, but it was soon to pass away. His subjects were soon to become his enemies. He already felt the scorching of the flames, but he flinched not. The rich, golden, and bedizened awning that shaded his throne smoked in the intense heat, and even while we watch, the imperial canopy takes fire, and the emperor of the amphitheater is crowned with a wreath of flame. Only one short moan falls upon our ears and all is over. The hero who so calmly sat enthroned upon his funeral pile had departed to a reward that awaits such a beautiful death. Had Nero been present, and had he possessed the feelings of a man, he might have been taught how to rule, and how to die, by one of his most despised slaves.

While the city burned, and millions were made homeless, Nero went into the wildest ecstasies over the grandeur of the scene. In order that the picture might be as imposing as possible, the people were not permitted to oppose the fury of the conflagration, but were compelled to remain inactive spectators of their own ruin. Six days and nights the fire raged, and Mr. Gibbon tells us that "the monuments of Grecian art and Roman virtue, the trophies of the Punic and Gallic wars, the most holy temples, and the most splendid palaces were involved in one common destruction. Of the fourteen regions, or quarters, into which Rome was divided, four only subsisted entire, three were leveled with the ground, and the remaining seven, which had experienced the fury of the flames, displayed a melancholy prospect of ruin and desolation." Amidst all this, Nero sat in the theater, gathered his few weak flatterers around him, and sang to the flames, which were plainly visible from the stage, with his lyre, "The Siege of Troy."

Five out of the seven millions of inhabitants were thus rendered homeless ; but Nero, fearing the ruin that might come upon his own head from an angry people, opened his gardens, and had temporary buildings erected for their accommodation, while the city could be rebuilt. Nero truly had good reason to fear, for the report was already

afloat that he had set the city on fire; and true enough it was, for, says the great historian above quoted, "every crime might be imputed to the assassin of his wife and mother; nor could the prince who prostituted his person and dignity on the theater be deemed incapable of the most extravagant folly."

Nero's own house was at last consumed. His liberality in the alleviation of suffering would not have saved him from the certain vengeance of the homeless had he not resorted to a tyranny more dreadful than the first. He laid the charge of the conflagration to the poor, harmless Christians; and, when he had arrested a host of them, had ruffians, who were hired, come forward and swear that they themselves were Christians, and that all of the accused, with themselves, were guilty as incendiaries of the city. The poor victims were taken, without a hearing, to the imperial gardens, sewed up in tarred sacks, tied to stakes, and burned to death, while Nero, mounted upon a golden chariot, exhibited his skill as a charioteer.





CHAPTER VII.

THE COLISEUM.

NERO died a violent death, partly from a wound inflicted by his own hand, when his Empire had been taken from him, and partly by the assistance of an attendant, who was well aware that he could serve the world best by thus serving his master. Vespasian, the commander of the Eastern armies, was raised to the dignity of emperor after three generals, who had been invested with the royal purple, were murdered. The command of the army in Judea was left to his son Titus, who advanced upon Jerusalem. Obstinate indeed was the resistance made by that peculiar people. Famine and pestilence swept them away by the thousand ; yet it was not the fault of the generous Titus, who only demanded their capitulation, and promised them the restoration of their former peace. The Christians who beheld the impending destruction remembered the prophecies of our Lord, recorded

in Matt. chap. xxiv, and fled to the mountains. In that terrible siege the number who perished is estimated at eleven hundred thousand. The triumphal entry of Titus into Rome was very imposing. Following him the golden vessels taken from the holy temple were borne upon the shoulders of captives, and the train of prisoners who followed numbered thousands upon thousands; but the victor, with all this, was a pure-minded and unpretending man.

The moderate and able Vespasian reigned with such economy and justice that the contrast between his administration and that of Nero was extremely salutary. In his reign the great Flavian Amphitheater was commenced. This is most generally known as the Coliseum, deriving its name, it is thought, from the colossal statue of Nero, erected in its immediate vicinity. It is more probable, however, that it derives its name from its own imposing appearance. Vespasian, the builder of this great monument, did not live to see it completed; still there has been erected a far grander monument to his memory in the hearts of his countrymen, one of whom said: "He was one in whom power made no alteration, except in giving him the opportunity of doing good equal to his inclinations."* Titus employed

* Pliny.

twelve thousand Jews upon the Coliseum, and at the end of two years and nine months completed this magnificent edifice. Its dimensions were enormous. It was an ellipse, whose longer diameter was six hundred and fifteen feet, and the shorter five hundred and ten feet. The longer diameter of the arena was about two hundred and eighty-one feet, and the shorter one hundred and seventy-six, leaving a circuit for the seats and galleries of about one hundred and fifty-seven feet in breadth. The external circumference was about seventeen hundred and seventy feet, covering an area of more than five acres and a half, and could not have been built on a rectangular piece of ground of less than seven acres.* The entire height of the building was one hundred and sixty-four feet. The outside of the building, which was four stories high, was of marble, and inside, the eighty rows of seats were of white marble also. These were covered with cushions, and eighty-seven thousand spectators could easily be accommodated, in a comfortable and luxurious manner. In fact no expense was spared to insure luxury; the air was refreshed by playing fountains, and little pipes or tubes carried the richest perfume to every row of seats. The arena was strewed with fine white sand, and

* See Desgodetz.

was so wonderfully constructed that by machinery arranged beneath it could be almost instantaneously changed into a tropical garden, and from that to a rocky and barren desert. Then, with the same rapidity of movement, a volume of water could be let in, and the sandy plain transformed into an extensive lake, covered with armed vessels, and replenished with the monsters of the deep. All was covered by an awning of various colors, called the *Velum*. This was stretched from wall to wall, for the protection of the spectators, whenever sun or rain made it necessary. It is estimated that the expense of the Coliseum would have built a capital city.

In the first year of the reign of the beloved Titus, A. D. 79, that dreadful eruption of Mount Vesuvius took place, in which Pompeii and Herculaneum were destroyed. Multitudes of people fled from Campania to Rome, seeking safety. Multitudes besides perished, either from the consuming lava or the noxious and suffocating vapor. The humane Emperor proceeded in person to the scene of misery, and did all in his power to alleviate suffering, but was soon recalled to his capital by the news that a fire had broken out and raged three days, rendering many of his subjects homeless. And what was worse, immediately following these calamities, one more disastrous

still came, in the form of a fearful malady among the people, by which ten thousand died daily for a considerable period. Whether this was the effect of the noxious vapor, or of the crowded state of the city on account of the numbers of fugitives that found refuge there, is uncertain. After repairing the losses of the fire, mostly from his own treasury, he sought to divert the minds of his distracted people by the dedication of the Coliseum. This he immediately completed, and entertained them with the most splendid spectacles they had ever beheld in the arena. These entertainments lasted through one hundred consecutive days, and it is estimated that nine thousand wild beasts perished at the hands of gladiators during that time.

The time of the dedication was published throughout the whole Empire, and an historian tells us that "people from every part of the world crowded to Rome to be present at these games." On the appointed day we find the Coliseum filled to its utmost capacity. The generous Titus is seated in his elegant pavilion. Eighty thousand anxious faces wait expectant for the opening scene, which is to be considerably different from the usual order. The arena presents a strange sight indeed. Instead of the level plain is a wild and rocky prospect, with dens and caves around

and above which trees had been temporarily planted. A number of gladiators, dressed as hunters, with lance, and sword, and bow, appear. No sooner have they entered than as many wild beasts of different kinds, lions, tigers, panthers, and hyenas, rush out of the dens and attack the hunters. A lively combat ensues. The people become excited, and forget the distresses they have so lately endured. As beast after beast is slain the enthusiasm of the populace grows wilder and wilder, and many a shout of gratitude ascends to the praise of their magnanimous sovereign.

Amidst all their delight the hunting is brought to a close, and a general surprise follows. The arena is immediately flooded, and the waters teem with aquatic animals of every description. These are made to contend by first arousing their anger, and then driving them together in a general confusion. Besides this, men in ships are engaged in capturing the shark—all of which is received with an almost ceaseless uproar of applause. No sooner is the water cleared of these animals than armed galleys are launched, and sail side by side. Here we have the representation of a naval engagement between the Corinthians and Corcyrians.

Beautiful, indeed, was the life of Titus. His efforts were directed wholly to promote the hap-

piness of his people. So zealous was he that one evening, while reviewing the events of the day, and finding that no good deed had been performed, he exclaimed, "O! my friends, I have lost a day!" At another time, when reminded by his courtiers that he had promised more to the solicitations of a suppliant than he could readily perform, he answered that "no man ought to depart from the presence of his prince with a dejected countenance." So jealous was he of the comfort and welfare of the people that he well deserved the title—"The delight of mankind"—which they conferred upon him.

Toward the close of these splendid spectacles the mind of Titus was oppressed by some unknown anxiety. On the last day of the games his dejection was particularly noticeable. He was even seen to burst into tears. He acknowledged that he had received warnings of his impending fate. In a few days more he died of a fever, amidst the lamentations of his idolizing subjects. Upon his death-bed he declared that, in the whole course of his life, he recollected but one action of which he repented. What this was he did not live long enough to reveal. Strange it was, that after a short reign of only two years and three months, the benefactor of this great family, that numbered millions, should be taken.

Vespasian and Titus were the only Roman emperors, up to this date, who died natural deaths. The truth of the whole matter is explained in the fact that *virtue* could not live in Rome.

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CHAPTER VIII.

SPECTACLES.

UNLADLY would we linger at the death-bed of Titus, but we must hasten on. We have consumed so much of our time in the last two centuries in visiting public spectacles that we must be content to pass rapidly over the two or three centuries that yet remain. Domitian, the brother of the mild Titus, was his successor. He despised the gentle and generous spirit of his brother, and excelled Nero as a monster of cruelty by the refinement of his barbarities. Nero was only a heartless wretch. Domitian was literally a cruel one; and, when he found no other cruelty to practice, he spent his leisure in catching flies, at which he was exceedingly expert. He went so far as to declare himself God, and the innumerable victims that were sacrificed before his statues and his altars became no inconsiderable tax on the Roman people. The

newly dedicated Coliseum he disgraced by exhibiting gladiatorial combats of women in the night time. To be wealthy or noble, with him, was death, and above all, to be virtuous brought death with the severest tortures. He once assembled the Senate to consider in what utensil it was best that a certain fish should be dressed. At another time he invited the Senate to a feast, and, when they had arrived at the palace, they were, by his order, conducted to a gloomy subterraneous hall, lighted by dim tapers, hung with black, and provided with coffins, on one of which each guest saw his own name inscribed. Soldiers, with drawn swords, came in upon them, and threatened their lives. Esteeming this a good joke, he let them depart.

Trajan became the virtuous successor to the purple after a short interval of sixteen months, during which time the empire had been well governed by the venerable Nerva. So virtuous was Trajan that more than two hundred and fifty years after his death, the Senate, in pouring out the customary acclamations on the accession of a new emperor, wished that he might surpass the felicity of Augustus and the *virtue* of Trajan. This brave and generous prince, under whom the empire was extended to its farthest limits, rivaled, and even excelled Titus in the exhibition of pub-

lic spectacles. He continued a solemnity, similar to that exhibited by Titus, through a period of one hundred and twenty-three days, in which gladiatorial fights were presented, as well as combats with wild beasts, and naval engagements. The entire number of gladiators brought out during this protracted entertainment reached ten thousand.

We will again advance about three-quarters of a century, and we arrive at the reign of the cruel and dissolute Commodus. Cruelty, which at first was dictated by others, became the ruling passion of his soul. He received the empire at the hands of his noble and beloved father when only nineteen years old. Commodus was exceedingly graceful in person, and a popular orator. A few extracts from Mr. Gibbon will represent his character, and the nature of his spectacles; better than we can give them. "Commodus, from his earliest infancy, discovered an aversion to whatever was rational or liberal, and a fond attachment to the amusements of the populace, the sports of the circus and amphitheater, the combats of gladiators, and the hunting of wild beasts. The masters in every branch of learning, whom Marcus provided for his son, were heard with inattention and disgust, while the Moors and Parthians, who taught him to dart the javelin and to shoot the bow, found a disciple

who delighted in his application and soon equaled the most skillful of his instructors in the steadiness of his eye and the dexterity of his hand."

Hercules was the model whom he copied, and he even styled himself the *Roman Hercules*. The club and lion's hide were placed by the side of the throne as the ensigns of sovereignty. "Elated with these praises, which gradually extinguished the innate sense of shame, Commodus resolved to exhibit, before the eyes of the Roman people, those exercises which till then he had decently confined within the walls of his palace and to the presence of a few favorites. On the appointed day the various motives of flattery, fear, and curiosity attracted to the amphitheater an immense multitude of spectators, and some degree of applause was deservedly bestowed upon the uncommon skill of the imperial performer. Whether he aimed at the head or heart of the animal, the wound was alike certain and mortal. With arrows, whose point was shaped into the form of a crescent, Commodus often intercepted the rapid career and cut asunder the long, bony neck of the ostrich. A panther was let loose, and the archer waited until he had leaped upon a trembling malefactor. In the same instant the shaft flew, the beast dropped, and the man remained unhurt. The dens of the amphitheater disgorged at once a

hundred lions ; a hundred darts from the unerring hand of Commodus laid them dead as they ran raging round the arena. Neither the huge bulk of the elephant, nor the scaly hide of the rhinoceros could defend them from his stroke."

We are told that in these exhibitions he destroyed some of the most timid and harmless animals, among which was a giraffe, the first one that was ever brought to Rome. In every case, the strictest precautions were taken to protect the person of the Roman Hercules from the desperate spring of any animal who might possibly disregard the dignity of the Emperor. The shame of the Emperor was, however, completed when he entered the lists as a gladiator. His people bore the shame which he did not feel himself, even the meanest subject blushed for him. He assumed the dress of a combatant in complete armor, and always engaged those who were unarmed, except with net and trident, as was Galdus in his combat with the African. The Emperor fought in this character seven hundred and thirty-five times. His combats in public, however, rarely proved fatal to his antagonist, although he was always victorious. But, when he exercised his skill in the school of the gladiators, or his own palace, his wretched antagonists were frequently honored with a mortal wound. He now disdained the

title of Hercules and chose that of Paulus, a celebrated gladiator. The infamous tyrant had each of his *glorious* achievements carefully recorded among the public acts of the empire. Commodus was choked to death by the hand of an assassin.

Nearly a century later, when the arms of the Emperor Probus had overcome all the enemies of the State, he returned to the capital, and a magnificent triumph was granted to him. In the midst of this, the heroes of the Coliseum, aroused by the same spirit that actuated Spartacus, attempted a similar career, which, however nobly and courageously it was begun, proved less formidable. The historian says: "We can not, on this occasion, forget the desperate courage of about fourscore gladiators, reserved, with near six hundred others, for the inhuman sports of the amphitheater. Disdaining to shed their blood for the amusement of the populace, they killed their keepers, broke the place of their confinement, and filled the streets of Rome with blood and confusion. After an obstinate resistance, they were overpowered and cut in pieces by the regular forces; but they obtained, at last, an honorable death, and the satisfaction of a just revenge."

Two years after this notable event (A. D. 283), Rome was again burdened with a second Domitian in the person of Carinus. The only event

that has been worthy of record during his infamous reign was the grandeur with which he celebrated the Roman games of the theater, circus, and amphitheater. We are obliged to confess that never in the history of Rome was so much art and expense lavished for the gratification of the vulgar tastes of the people. By the order of the Emperor, a great number of large trees were torn up by the roots, and transplanted to the midst of the amphitheater. Says Mr. Gibbon: "The spacious and shady forest was immediately filled with a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a thousand fallow deer, and a thousand wild boars; and all this variety of game was abandoned to the riotous impetuosity of the multitude. The tragedy of the succeeding day consisted in the massacre of a hundred lions, an equal number of lionesses, two hundred leopards, and three hundred bears.

"The collection prepared by the younger Gordian for his triumph, and which his successor exhibited in the secular games, was less remarkable by the number than by the singularity of the animals. Twenty zebras displayed their elegant forms and variegated beauty to the eyes of the Roman people. Ten elks, and as many camelopards, the loftiest and most harmless creatures that wander over the plains of Sarmatia and

Ethiopia, were contrasted with thirty African hyenas and ten Indian tigers, the most implacable savages of the torrid zone. The unoffending strength with which nature has endowed the greater quadrupeds, was admired in the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus of the Nile, and a majestic troop of thirty-two elephants ; while the populace gazed with stupid wonder on the splendid show, the naturalist might indeed observe the figure and properties of so many different species, transported from every part of the ancient world into the amphitheater of Rome." "In the decoration of these scenes, the Roman emperors displayed their wealth and liberality ; and we read, on various occasions, that the whole furniture of the amphitheater consisted either of silver, or of gold, or of amber. The poet who described the games of Carinus, in the character of a shepherd attracted to the capital by the fame of their magnificence, affirms that the nets designed as a defense against the wild beasts were of gold wire ; that the porticoes were gilded, and that the *belt*, or circle, which divided the several ranks of spectators from each other, was studded with a precious mosaic of beautiful stones."

But, in the midst of this glittering magnificence, and in the midst of the flattering acclamations of people and courtiers, the empire of Car-

nus was taken from him, and, in that hour, his brother, and joint emperor, died nine hundred miles distant from Rome, and the imperial scepter passed into the hand of a stranger. In the year 312, Constantine the Great became emperor; and strange indeed were the circumstances under which he espoused the cause and made the religion of Christ the religion of the empire. It is recorded by Eusebius that, while Constantine was in the field against Maxentius, with whom he was contending for the sovereignty, a flaming cross, far brighter than the noonday sun, appeared in the sky inscribed with the command, written in Greek: "By this, conquer." It was seen by the whole army, and it is said, by the Emperor himself, that the following night the Savior himself appeared to him, displayed to him an ensign with a cross upon it, instructed him to construct one similar to it, and assured him that by it he should conquer. Constantine was obedient to his vision, and won the victory of the succeeding day.

In the year 325 A. D., the Christian Emperor issued an edict prohibiting the combats of gladiators in the East. At least, he forbade those who were condemned to die for their crimes to be employed. He ordered that they should rather be sent to the mines in lieu thereof. During the several persecutions preceding this date,



THE BOY MARTYR OF THE ARENA.

great numbers of the innocent and inoffensive Christians had been compelled to fight in the arena for the amusement of their persecutors. They did it, of course, with great reluctance ; but they had to choose one of two alternatives—either to deny their faith and prostrate themselves at the altar of some heathen deity, or fight.

The humane edict of Constantine was soon annulled by his successor, Julian the Apostate, and for half a century longer Christianity was obliged to contend with this inhuman institution of a heathen and barbarous age. Many are the tales of bloodshed and horror that might be told by one of the stones in that old Coliseum could it only speak, and the few pictures that we have drawn of Roman glory and pleasure are but faint indeed. Certainly, the most successful of all gladiators was Christ. In him we find most to admire, most to love, most to imitate ; and, since we have beheld the wicked and sanguinary combats of men, the contrast between them and the life and character of Jesus must, if viewed carefully, and especially prayerfully, have a beneficial effect upon our minds. In the death of Jesus we find a heroism, and, what is a far stronger test of real greatness, love, such as was never exhibited in the amphitheater. Our visit to Italy has truly been a profitable one, although it has not always

been as pleasant as we would have desired. Leaving our visit to the last gladiatorial show to a future chapter, we will, in the mean time, reside at Rome, and note the effect of Christianity upon the mind and manners of the proud Romans. We will also endeavor to trace the life and conflicts of its greatest champions and its boldest gladiators, who took up the sword of the Gladiator of Judea, and with it cut away superstition, paganism, and the long catalogue of vices and disorders that were bound up in it.



PART II.

M O N K S:

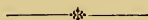
Fathers of the Church and Fathers of the Desert.



MONKS:

OR

Fathers of the Church and Fathers of the Desert.



CHAPTER IX.

PAUL AND ANTHONY.



WITH our new subject we begin the consideration of a new mode of warfare—a style of combat equally, and probably more effectual than that of the sword—a warfare carried on by nobler, grander, and braver spirits than ever donned an armor or hurled a lance. The enemies they had to encounter were no less than the world, the flesh, and the devil. We do not believe that “contrasts are always beautiful,” but certainly they are sometimes profitable. We have been wearied with bloodshed and cruelty, and from contact with a world so corrupt, so wicked, that were it not for the self-sacrificing

spirit of such men as are named for the subject of this chapter, Christianity, like a grain of mustard-seed cast upon the ground, might have been trodden under foot and crushed.

Let us, then, flee to the desert, and behold how men who have lived nobly can die grandly. It is hardly necessary for us to speak any further on the general state of corruption that existed in society at the time of which we write. Nothing could have been more loathsome than its utter rottenness. No right, no justice, no virtue existed. Man had lost all his self-respect, and woman all her decency. Falsehood was preferred to truth, cruelty to humanity, villainy to equity. Honesty gave rise to suspicion, and virtue was a crime. And glad indeed are we that words have not been found in our own chaste mother tongue to express the depth of vice, and the horrible crime into which this people had fallen. The poor, unoffending Christians, were charged with being the cause of every public calamity. They were slandered, as worshipers of the head of an ass, which they were said to set up in the midst of their assemblies; and so ready were corrupt minds to degrade others to a level with themselves, that this soon became the current belief with the masses of the heathen.

It was in this state of affairs that Christians

found that they must either tear themselves away from the corrupt world or perish with it. It was not persecution that they feared, for the life they chose was almost a constant death. Yet they were willing to brave the climate of the Egyptian desert, with its scorching sun and wetting dews, only that they might enjoy a life of contemplation and constant communion with God. Here, amidst prayer and labor, amidst want and self-denial, which not unfrequently degenerated into self-torture, these lords of the sands sought that sanctification which they deemed it impossible to attain in the midst of a wicked and degenerate world.

Monks, like the rest of humanity, differed considerably, and had their different names and manner of life. There were hermits, who lived in a cell or cave, away from contact even with other monks. Anachorets, or anchorites, as we prefer to call them, were hermits who were not always confined to their own society, but sometimes lived a short distance from other anchorites. When many of these habitations were placed together in the same wilderness, at some distance from each other, the community thus formed was called *a laura*. Monasteries were buildings in which a number of monks dwelt together, under the control of one of their number, who was vested with supreme authority, and was called an abbot. This

great system of monasticism had properly two founders—Paul, the hermit, and Anthony, who is styled the patriarch of the monks. Paul was a native of the Lower Thebais, in Egypt—itsself the birthplace, but especially the dwelling-place of monks. When fifteen years old he lost his parents, who left him a considerable fortune, and at that early age had provided him with an excellent education in the Greek and Egyptian schools. In the year 250 Decius persecuted the Christians with the tortures of the rack and lash, and, deeming the stake too quick a mode of torture, had honey rubbed all over the body of the victim, who was then stretched out on his back, with his hands tied behind him, on the hot sands, at mid-day, that flies and wasps, which are quite intolerable in hot countries, might torment and gall him with their stings until life was extinct. During these times of danger Paul kept himself concealed in the house of a friend, but was warned that a brother-in-law intended to betray him, in order that he might obtain his estate, and fled to the deserts. There he chose a cave in a rock, which was said to have been the retreat of money-coiners in the days of Queen Cleopatra. By his cave was a clear spring of water, and a palm-tree which furnished him leaves for clothing, and fruit for food. Paul, who was only twenty-two years old,

had no idea of remaining in his solitude, but intended to return as soon as the persecutions should end. But he enjoyed his retirement and heavenly contemplation to such an extent that he determined to spend his life in the desert. Many strange things are told of him. It is said he lived on the fruit of his tree until he was forty-three years of age ; at which time it ceased to bear, and from that time to his death, like Elias, he was miraculously fed by a raven, who brought him bread every day.

Anthony, the great patriarch of the monks, was born in the year 251 A. D., at Coma, a village of Upper Egypt, on the borders of Arcadia. When twenty years old his parents died, and left him vast possessions. He was, also, placed in charge of a younger sister. He had never had the advantages of an education, except that he had learned to read Egyptian. His parents, who were strictly pious, had always kept him at home, so that he grew up untainted by bad example or wicked conversation. So affected was he at reading the words of the Savior addressed to the rich young man, "Go sell that thou hast and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," (Matt. xix, 21,) that he sold all his property, placed his sister in the charge of kind and Christian teachers, and retired into the desert

adjoining his native village. His food was only bread, with a little salt, and he drank nothing but water. He never ate before sunset, and sometimes only once in two or four days. His bed was sometimes a rush mat, but more frequently the bare floor. Dissatisfied with his proximity to the village, he went farther into the desert, and took up his abode in an old sepulcher. To this place a faithful friend brought him bread. Here it is said he endured the severest temptations, and only freed himself from them by crossing the Eastern branch of the Nile, and taking up his abode in the ruins of an old castle, on the top of the mountains. In this he lived twenty years, very rarely seeing any man, except one, who brought him bread every six months. The fame of his sanctity attracted great numbers of disciples, and many heathens visited him. To satisfy the numerous requests of his friends he forsook his home on the mountain, and founded the first monastery at Phaium. This at first consisted of scattered cells, similar to a *laura*, but afterward, as numbers flocked to it, a substantial edifice was erected. At his death the followers he had gathered around him numbered fifteen thousand. Although busily engaged at labor in his new undertaking he limited his diet to six ounces of bread per day. This was soaked in

water, with a little salt. Sometimes he added a few dates and a little oil. His dress consisted of an under-garment of sackcloth, over which he wore a white coat of sheep-skin and a girdle.

In the year 311, during the persecutions by Maximinus, Anthony journeyed from the desert, and appeared in Alexandria. Hoping himself to receive the martyr's crown, he visited the martyrs in the mines and prisons, encouraged them before the tribunal, and accompanied them to the places of public execution. He constantly wore his white sheep-skin coat, and fearlessly appeared in the presence of the governor and judges, yet no one laid hands on the saint of the desert. At the close of the persecutions he returned to his monastery to remain for a short time only, after which he proceeded to the Nile to found another monastery. Having accomplished this, he and a beloved disciple, Macarius by name, took up their abode in a remote cell, on a mountain of difficult access.

In the year 339 he saw a vision of mules kicking down the altar. This he interpreted to be a persecution caused by the Arian heretics, which is said to have come to pass in exact accordance with his prophecy. When ninety years old, while reflecting upon his past life, he began to rejoice in what he had done, and, falling into temptation,

began to praise himself, as the founder of two great monasteries, and of a life so holy, which he had induced so many to enter upon. That night he was informed in a dream of the dwelling-place of Paul, the hermit, of whom he had never heard. He was also commanded to go into the desert in search of this holy servant of God.

Anthony, after a weary search of two days and a night, discovered the saint's abode from a light that was in it. Having long begged admittance at the door of the cell, Paul opened it to him, and received him in his embrace, calling him by name, which had been made known to him in a dream. Paul then inquired whether idolatry still reigned in the world, and, while they were conversing together, a raven dropped a loaf of bread before them, upon which Paul said: "Our good God has sent us a dinner. In this manner have I received half a loaf every day these sixty years past. Now you are come to see me, Christ has doubled his provision for his servants." After spending the night in prayer, Paul told his guest that he was about to die, and said, "Go fetch the cloak given you by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in which I desire you to wrap my body." Anthony hastened to the monastery and complied with Paul's request. Strange indeed is the account of his death and burial; and we

relate it merely for what it is worth. It is said :* “Anthony having taken the cloak, returned with it in all haste, fearing lest the holy hermit might be dead, as it happened. While on his road he saw his happy soul carried up to heaven, attended by choirs of angels, prophets, and apostles. Although he rejoiced on Paul’s account, he could not help lamenting on his own for having lost a treasure so lately discovered. As soon as sorrow would permit he arose, pursued his journey, and came to the cave. Going in he found the body kneeling, and the hands stretched out. Full of joy, and supposing him yet alive, he knelt down to pray with him, but, by his silence, soon perceived he was dead. Having paid his last respects to the corpse, he carried it out of the cave. While he stood perplexed how to dig a grave two lions came up quietly, and, as it were, moaning, and, tearing up the ground, made a hole large enough for the reception of a human body.” Paul died in the one hundred and thirteenth year of his age. Anthony highly prized the palm-leaf garment of the hermit, and wore it on public occasions.

Constantine the Great wrote a letter to Anthony, recommending himself to his prayers, and desiring an answer. Observing the surprise of

* Butler’s Lives of the Saints.

his disciples, he said: "Do not wonder that the Emperor writes to us, one man to another—rather admire that God should have written to us, and that he has spoken to us by his Son." He was finally persuaded to answer the letter, in which he advised the Emperor to lay aside worldliness, and remember the judgment to come.

Anthony, finding that his cell was becoming too public, and visits were so frequent that his devotions were continually interrupted, determined to seek a new and more remote dwelling-place. With this purpose he journeyed up the Nile, with the intention of going far into Southern Egypt, but, while sitting down to rest and watch a boat that was passing, he changed his mind. He then journeyed eastward into the desert three days, until he came to Mount Calzim. Here he fixed his last residence, near the Red Sea. In the year 351, when a hundred years old, he showed himself, for the second and last time, in the metropolis of Egypt, to bear witness for the orthodox faith of his friend Athanasius. His emaciated, ghost-like form, with his hairy dress, made a powerful impression on the heathens. He preached boldly in the streets of that wicked and turbulent city. All people ran to see him, and rejoiced to hear him. The heathens themselves, as they flocked to him, said: "We

desire to see the man of God." His preaching was attended with wonderful success. The heretical Christians were confounded and put to shame by his earnest, homely logic, and the pagans found a rebuke for their voluptuous effeminacy in the grand self-denial, self-sacrifice, miserable magnificence of the man of the desert, who could crucify the passions and temptations of his weak human nature, and could grasp after the Divine and the invisible. In a few days he converted more heathen and heretics than had otherwise been gained in a whole year. Some even go so far as to say that he wrought many miracles, and it is affirmed that when the Bishop Athanasius attended him as far as the gate of the city, as he was about to depart, he cast out an evil spirit from a girl. He declined an invitation of the Emperor Constantine to visit Constantinople, and when asked by the Governor of Egypt to stay longer in the city, he replied: "As a fish out of water, so a monk out of his solitude dies." While at Alexandria he met with the famous blind Bishop Didymus, whom he told that he ought not to regret much the loss of his eyes, for they were common to ants and flies, on account of that which he possessed in the light which dwelt within him.

He despised human science, and said: "He

who has a sound mind has no need of learning." The Bible alone was his text-book, and this he studied frequently while at work. He spent considerable time in making rush mats, and while engaged at this he found it quite convenient to read. When certain philosophers asked him how he could spend his time in solitude, without the pleasure of reading books, he replied that Nature was his great book, and amply supplied the want of others. At another time, when philosophers came to him with the intention of making sport of his ignorance, he asked them, with great simplicity, which was first, reason or learning, and which had produced the other? They replied, "Reason or good sense." "This, then," said Anthony, "suffices."

Our venerable saint, on his return from Alexandria, visited his monasteries, when he was besought by his monks, with tears in their eyes, to remain and die with them; but they could not prevail upon him.

He hastened back to his cell on the mountain by the sea, where he lived nearly a year longer with two of his faithful companions, who had ministered to his wants for fifteen years. When he was taken sick he told them not to embalm his body, as was the custom of some, but to bury him in the ground, like the patriarchs. He

especially warned them to keep secret the place of his burial, lest, according to the superstitions so fast becoming prevalent, his bones might be preserved as relics. Athanasius reports his last words as follows: "Do not let them carry my body into Egypt, lest they store it in their houses. One of my reasons for coming to this mountain was to hinder this. You know I have reproved those who have done this, and charged them to cease from the custom. Bury, then, my body in the earth, in obedience to my word, so that no one may know the place except yourselves. In the resurrection of the dead it will be restored to me, incorruptible, by the Savior. Distribute my garments as follows: Let Athanasius, the bishop, have the one sheep-skin and the garment I sleep on, which he gave me new, and which has grown old with me. Let Serapion, the bishop, have the other sheep-skin. As to the hair-skirt, keep it for yourselves. And now, my children, farewell. Anthony is going, and is no longer with you."

He died at the age of one hundred and five years, unburdened by old age. His sight was unimpaired, and his teeth were only worn, not one of them having dropped out. Rarely, indeed, do we find in history a will and energy equal to his. Many men possess abilities that

accomplish, probably, two or three wonders in a life-time, but we have not found one that has equaled a life of almost ninety years of self-denial, and patience, and suffering, such as that endured by Anthony. May we profit by his virtues, and guard against his mistakes !





CHAPTER X.

AMBROSE, ARCHBISHOP OF MILAN.



THE title of the second division of our little work is "Fathers of the Church and Fathers of the Desert." We have transposed the order of this sentence, and given you the fathers of the desert first. Probably we can obtain a slight idea, at least, of the grand lives lived by the early fathers, whether in the cell of a monk or in the Episcopal chair. in no better way than by taking glances at the acts of firm determination performed, and the innumerable self-sacrifices endured by them. This Archbishop, by his life, furnishes a picture of extraordinary interest to the reader of history who looks along the ages and beholds its heroes, as a spectator gazing upon an extended gallery of paintings perceives them to possess merit and beauty in greater or less degree.

Ambrose was the son of noble parents, who

were Romans. He was born in Gaul about the year 340. His father, at that time, was Prætorian Prefect of Gaul, and resided at Arles, the capital. When Ambrose was an infant in the cradle, it is said that a swarm of bees came into the house and settled upon his mouth. This his father interpreted as a portent of future greatness.

After his father's death, his mother took him to Rome, where he received a thorough law education. He, for some time, pleaded at the bar, and his success, together with his family influence, obtained for him the position of Consular Prefect in Northern Italy. When Anicius Probus, the Prefect, gave him his commission, and sent him to his province, he addressed these remarkably prophetic words to him: "Go, then, and act not as a judge, but as a bishop." Ambrose made his residence in the royal city of Milan. There, in the exercise of government, he manifested a degree of wisdom and justice that obtained for him universal esteem. When he was thirty-four years old, the Archbishop of Milan died; the Church was disordered within itself by the heresy of the Arians (whose belief concerning our Savior was almost as blasphemous as that of modern Unitarians, and whose influence was more severely felt), and it was found very difficult to make a new election. In the midst of the turbulent assembly,

Ambrose arose, and, by an eloquent speech, recommended a peaceable election. At the close of his address, a child cried out: "Ambrose is bishop!" The voice of the innocent was regarded as a miraculous suggestion, and he was at once elected unanimously by acclamation. The civil magistrate used every means in his power to dissuade the people from such a step; and, when appointed, he resorted to several expedients for the purpose of obtaining an acceptance of his resignation. The Emperor himself, who well knew the abilities of Ambrose, insisted on his acceptance; the young bishop, who had not yet been baptized, was obliged to submit. He was then baptized, and, in eight days afterward, entered upon the duties of his Episcopal office. His mother and sister were both women of the strictest piety. They had brought him up, not only in the way of strict uprightness and virtue, but had educated him to a limited extent in the orthodox faith. Although unprepared for the service of the Church, by the education he had received as a lawyer, yet, as Mr. Gibbon says, "The active force of his genius soon qualified him to exercise, with zeal and prudence, the duties of his ecclesiastical jurisdiction; while he cheerfully renounced the vain and splendid trappings of temporal greatness, he condescended, for the good of the Church,

to direct the conscience of the emperors, and to control the administration of the empire."

In 337 he was obliged to retire to Illyricum, on account of an invasion by the warlike Goths. They, however, were soon overcome by the Roman Emperor, and the bishop, with his exiles, returned home. Ambrose embraced every opportunity to defend the true faith against the Arians. He devoted his whole energy, as well as his life, to the Church. "Wealth was the object of his contempt; he had renounced his private patrimony, and he sold, without hesitation, the consecrated plate, for the redemption of captives. The clergy and people of Milan were attached to their Archbishop, and he deserved the esteem without soliciting the favor or apprehending the displeasure of his feeble sovereigns." He bestowed his personal property, in the form of money, upon the poor, gave his lands to the Church, and committed the care of his house and family to his brother. In 381, at a council of thirty-two bishops, at which Ambrose presided, a dispute concerning the Arian faith arose. He very quietly settled the matter, after the disturbance had become intolerable, by deposing two of the discontented bishops from their offices. Three years later, the leader of the pagans, a wealthy Senator, sent a petition to the Emperor, asking for the restoration of the altar

of victory to its ancient place in the hall of the Senate, and the public funds for the support of the seven vestal virgins, and their religious ceremonies. Ambrose warned the Emperor not to grant the petitions, saying: "It is a debt which a Christian prince owes to his faith not to give countenance to heathen rites."

The Arians, who were now very formidable, had the support of the young Emperor, Valentinian, or rather of his mother, Justinia, a woman of beauty and spirit, upon whom the government principally devolved. She, believing that the Emperor had a right to demand as many churches as he desired for the purpose of worship, without regard to the faith, made a demand for the use of one of two churches. It mattered little to her whether it was situated in the city or suburbs. The bishop positively refused the request, and said although the palaces of the earth might belong to Cæsar, the churches were the houses of God, and that within his diocese he was the lawful successor of the apostles, and the only minister of God; that the privileges of Christianity, temporal as well as spiritual, were (as he thought) confined to the true believers, and he was satisfied that his theological opinions were right. He then declared it his intention to die a martyr rather than to yield to the impious sacrilege by delivering up the tem-

ple of God into the hands of Arians. Justinia, enraged at the refusal, declared it disloyalty and rebellion. She, desiring to perform her devotions at Easter, which was then approaching, summoned the offending bishop into her presence, and that of her council. He obeyed the summons with all the respect that a subject was capable of showing, but was followed, against his will, by a tumultuous crowd of people, who pressed with loud clamor against the gates of the imperial palace, and so affrighted the timid ministers of the Empress that they humbly requested the Archbishop to interpose his authority for the protection of the Emperor, and the restoration of peace in the city. Ambrose persistently refused the use of a church for the Emperor, and the court were obliged to resort to means of force. They immediately issued orders to the officers of the household, first to prepare the Potion Church, and afterward the new Basilica for the reception of the Emperor and his mother. The canopy and hanging of the royal seat were arranged, but it was found necessary to protect them from the violence of the people by a strong guard. The Arian priests, who made their appearance in the streets, did it at the risk of their lives, and more than once the generous prelate had the privilege of rescuing his avowed enemies from death at the hands of his people.

During this preparation, Ambrose preached, with pathetic vehemence, from his pulpit, and likened the Empress to Eve, to the wife of Job, to Jezebel and Herodias. Still, at the same time, he restrained his people from public violence. The bishop was supported by the populace and most respectable citizens in his continued refusal of the church; and the court, finding violence to be of no avail, solicited Ambrose to restore peace to his country by complying with the will of his Emperor. He resolutely replied: "If you demand my patrimony, which is devoted to the poor, take it; if you demand my person, I am ready to submit. Carry me to prison or to death, I will not resist; but I will never betray the Church of Christ. I will not call upon the people to succor me; I will die at the foot of the altar rather than desert it. The tumult of the people I will not encourage, but God alone can appease."

The Emperor and court were determined no longer to submit to this defiance of their power, and a large body of Goths were dispatched to take possession of the church. They were encountered on the threshold by the Archbishop, who, thundering out a threat of excommunication, asked them by what authority they presumed to enter the house of God. Struck with terror, the barbarians returned to the Empress, who was per-

suaded, temporarily, to leave Ambrose in possession of the churches of Milan. This peace was, however, quite temporary ; for, soon after, an edict of toleration to all Arians was issued by the Emperor, and it was announced to Ambrose that he would be allowed to choose the *place* of his exile and the number of persons he desired to attend him. Mr. Gibbon thus describes the manner in which the determined bishop received the edict: "He boldly refused to obey; and his refusal was supported by the unanimous consent of his faithful people. They guarded, by turns, the person of their Archbishop; the gates of the cathedral, and the Episcopal palace, were strongly secured, and the imperial troops, who had formed the blockade, were unwilling to risk the attack of that impregnable fortress. The numerous poor, who had been relieved by the liberality of Ambrose, embraced the fair occasion of signaling their zeal and gratitude." The same author continues: "While he maintained this arduous contest, he was instructed by a dream to open the earth in a place where the remains of two martyrs, Gervasius and Protassius, had been deposited above three hundred years. Immediately under the pavement of the church two perfect skeletons were found, with the heads separated from their bodies, and a plentiful effusion of blood. The

holy relics were presented in solemn pomp to the veneration of the people, and every circumstance of this fortunate discovery was admirably adapted to promote the designs of Ambrose. The bones of the martyrs, their blood, their garments, were supposed to contain a healing power, and the preternatural influence was communicated to the most distant objects without losing any part of its original virtue. The extraordinary cure of a blind man, the reluctant confessions of several demoniacs, appeared to justify the faith and sanctity of Ambrose, and the truth of these miracles is attested by Ambrose himself, by his Secretary, Paulinus, and by his proselyte, the celebrated Augustine, who, at that time, professed the art of rhetoric at Milan.”* It is said that the blind man above referred to received his sight by touching the garment in which the corpse of the martyr was wrapped, and that he devoted the remainder of his life (two years) to the service of the Church. How true these miracles are, we are not able to say. Our only object in mentioning them is to inform you of what several great historians have affirmed to be facts.

Ambrose, again victorious, and more powerful than ever, instead of growing vain, exhibited one of the noblest traits of his character, in sacrificing

* Gibbon, xxvii chap.

personal resentment for the public good. More than once he served as an ambassador for the emperor who sought to banish him. In the year 387, when Maximus and his army took possession of Milan, Ambrose stood at his post, and a second time sold the consecrated plate used in the service of the Church, in order that he might obtain money to alleviate suffering. After Theodosius, the Emperor of the East, had again restored Valentinian to his throne, information was received that the monks and populace of a small town on the border of Persia had burnt a Jewish synagogue. The magistrate of the province commanded the bishop who had instigated the disturbance, either to rebuild the synagogue or pay the damage. The Emperor Theodosius had confirmed the command. Ambrose told the Emperor that he did not defend the offending bishop as having done altogether right, but he remonstrated privately with him not to enforce the command which he had recently confirmed, alleging as a reason that the toleration of the Jewish was a persecution of the Christian religion. Besides this, he addressed the Emperor publicly, from the pulpit, and refused to offer the oblation of the altar until he had obtained full pardon for the bishop and monks who caused the conflagration. The sedition of Thessalonica, so terrible in its nature,

was the instance of the grandest monument to the memory of Ambrose. Without any just reason, the rabble of this, the capital of the Illyrian provinces, had murdered the General, Botheric, and several officers of his army, while assembled to witness the public games. The Emperor, who then resided at Milan, determined that the blood of his general should be expiated by the blood of the guilty people. His bishops, at first, had almost obtained a free pardon for the Thessalonians ; but Theodosius again grew enraged, and dispatched the messengers of death. After they had departed, he repented, and tried to recall them, but it was too late. The people of Thessalonica were, invited in the name of their sovereign, to the games of the circus, and at the signal, which was supposed to be for the race, the soldiers, who had been concealed, arose from their hiding-places and slew, without distinction of age or sex, guilt or innocence, native or stranger, for three hours, and, according to the lowest estimate, as many as seven thousand were massacred. Some authors even affirm that no less than fifteen thousand persons were slain by this rash command of the usually moderate and generous Emperor. "A foreign merchant, who had probably no concern in this murder, offered his own life and all his wealth to supply the place of *one* of his two sons ; but, while

the father hesitated with equal tenderness ; while he was doubtful which to choose, and unwilling to condemn, the soldiers determined his suspense by plunging their daggers, at the same moment, into the breasts of the defenseless youths.”*

When Ambrose became acquainted with the circumstances that occasioned this cruel massacre, filled with anguish, he retired into the country that he might avoid Theodosius, and indulge the bitterness of his grief. While thus in seclusion, he penned a letter to the wicked Emperor, in which he represented to him the enormity of his guilt, and told him that it could only be forgiven when he should become sincerely penitent. He advised him not to dare to receive the holy eucharist with hands that were still polluted with the blood of an innocent people. To this admonition the worthy prelate added a threat of excommunication. Theodosius was much affected by these deserved reproofs, yet proceeded, as usual, to the Church of Milan to perform his devotion. “He was stopped in the porch by the Archbishop, who, in the tone and language of an ambassador from heaven, declared to his sovereign that private contrition was not sufficient to atone for a public fault, or to appease the justice of an offended Deity. Theodosius humbly represented that, if he had

* Gibbon, xxvii chap.

contracted the guilt of homicide, David, the man after God's own heart, had been guilty, not only of murder, but of adultery. 'You have imitated David in his crime, imitate then his repentance,' was the reply of the undaunted Ambrose."

It was not until eight months had elapsed that the Emperor was again received into the full privileges of the Church. During this time, he appeared in public, stripped of the ensigns of royalty, in a mournful and suppliant posture, in the Church of Milan, soliciting the pardon of his sins. So thorough was his repentance, that, in order to prevent any future rashness, he signed an edict enjoining a space of thirty days between the announcement of any sentence of death or confiscation and its execution.

Ambrose died in the year 397, A. D. His illness was but short, and so perfectly was his mind composed, when he discovered that the hour of his departure was at hand, that he declared to his friends "that he had not conducted himself so among them as to be either ashamed to live or afraid to die." Many traditionary miracles might be cited in this account of the life of Ambrose; but a life, already so grand of itself, can not, in the least, be embellished by superstitious fables. Some of these are as follows: He instantaneously cured a woman in Milan who was affected with

paralysis, while he was praying at her bedside. Two Arians, who affronted him, were instantly thrown from their horses and killed. A globe of fire, which covered his head in his last illness, and finally entered his mouth, left his face white as snow. The last of these is, that a voice proclaimed aloud to a bishop, who was in the house, just as he was expiring: "Arise, and hasten to him, for he is departing."

Ambrose was indeed a great man, and we can not speak with too much praise of his firmness, his liberality to the poor, his generosity to those who ill-used him; of his zeal in the cause of humanity, and for the exalted sanctity in which he held the Church of Christ, and all the holy ordinances instituted by the Master himself. Quite insufficient indeed would be our praise for such a defender of the doctrine of Christ's divinity, and were no other great work recorded of his life, this alone would be enough.

We consider Ambrose one of the very few who have lived, who, while yet a servant, was really a ruler; while a subject, was also a sovereign.

REFERENCES—Gibbon, xxvii chap.; M'Clintock & Strong's Biblical Cyc.; Rees's Cyc.



CHAPTER XI.

BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY NAZIANZEN.

IT is not our intention to enter into a rehearsal of details in this chapter, but to give merely an outline of the lives of these two great Fathers, who, while they were Fathers of the Church, were Fathers of the desert also. We hope that the reader, after perusing this very inadequate biography, which we present here, may find the inclination to study the lives of Basil and Gregory more thoroughly elsewhere. So closely connected were they, from the beginning to the end of their labors, that we do not feel warranted in treating them separately.

Basil, one of the most eminent of the Greek Fathers, was born about the year 328, at Neocæsarea. In his own family he found nobility, riches, and sanctity. From his father he received the first rudiments of his education in the study of polite literature and rhetoric. From his grandmother he received his instruction in Divine

things, and his love for all that is good and ennobling. He first studied at Cæsarea, in Palestine; then proceeded to Constantinople, where he became a pupil of the famous Libanius, who was charmed by the wondrous eloquence of his young disciple. At length he went to Athens for the purpose of studying science more thoroughly. Here he formed a life-long friendship for Gregory of Nazianzen, who was only one year his junior.

The father of this great and good man was the Bishop Gregory. His mother was Nonna, a woman whose piety has been the admiration of all students of Church history. At the birth of her son she presented him to the Lord, and dedicated him, by her promises and prayers, to His service. The son naturally inherited the piety and virtue of his mother, and his life is one of the finest examples of pure disinterestedness and unselfishness in the various steps to public honor, which he did not ascend of his own desire, but up which he was led by others. His eloquence was only equaled by that of Basil; and, in order that he might perfect his talents wholly for the good of the Church, he studied at both the Cæsareas, then at Alexandria, and finally at Athens. The first fruit of his youthful labors was reaped on his voyage from Alexandria to Athens. The vessel in which he sailed was beaten about for twenty

days in a terrible storm, during which time the crew and passengers were exposed to the most imminent peril. Gregory prayed without ceasing for the deliverance of the ship, and in response to his supplications, the sea became calm. Those on board acknowledged that it was through his instrumentality that they had been saved, and they all immediately embraced the Christian faith. While at Athens Gregory affirms that he and his friend knew only two streets in that large city—one led to the church, the other to the school. "To others," said he, "we left the road to profane banquets, to plays, balls, and assemblies, for nothing should interest us that does not tend to regulate our lives."

Resuming our account of Basil, we find that in the year 355, at the death of his father, he returned to his home at Cæsarea. Remaining there a short time, sufficient to settle the estate, he sold his portion, and traveled through Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Egypt. In this journey he visited the monks and solitaries in those regions, and admired their austerities and laborious life, with their extraordinary fervor, and assiduity in prayer. He was astonished to perceive that, although invincible to sleep, and the other necessities of nature, in hunger, thirst, cold, and nakedness, without a wish for any species of

relief, as if their body were a stranger to them—with one object in life only, and that a preparation for the future, they exhibited how men, while yet on earth, may claim citizenship in heaven.

Three years later he retired to a solitude of Pontus, where he built a monastery near that of his sister Macrius, where his mother then resided. Here, in company with his two brothers, and a great many others, whom he gathered around him, he became the founder of monasticism in those regions. From this place he wrote to Gregory, who was then at home with his parents, and at length persuaded him to join him in his solitude. In the year 362 Eusebius ordained Basil priest, much against his will, for he chose rather to remain in his solitude at Pontus. The reputation that Basil soon gained in Cæsarea for his fearless denunciation of Arians, together with his eloquence, excited the envy of the prelate who had so lately elevated him. He, discovering this, made his escape to his old home, the monastery of Pontus. Gregory, just previous to the ordination of Basil, had been called home, and ordained by his father, who much needed his assistance. He again rejoined his old companion in his retreat, and by means of letters addressed to Eusebius succeeded in reconciling him with Basil, who returned again to Cæsarea.

In 370 Eusebius died, and, after much opposition on the part of ambitious and scheming bishops of neighboring cities, who desired to succeed Eusebius themselves, Basil was elected, much to the gratification of the people of Cæsarea. We will not attempt to follow Basil in all that he endured and accomplished during his episcopate. He was persecuted by the Emperor Valens; but under the Emperor Gratian, who succeeded to the throne of the East, he had the satisfaction of seeing all persecutions stopped, and all the banished bishops recalled. Finally, after a long series of cares, episcopal solicitude, instructions, dogmatic writings, contests with Arians, toils and persecutions, endured with heroic fortitude—after a life ever pure, yet ever penitential, ever crossed with contradiction and opposition, and ever adorned with resplendent virtue, the frequent maladies which he had suffered, and the strict asceticism he had practiced, brought on that hour which was to terminate this glorious career of sanctity. He died January 1st, 379, in the fiftieth year of his age, with these words on his lips: “O Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

Loud were the lamentations of his bereaved people, who so loved him that vast multitudes followed him to his grave, and pressed forward to

touch his body, or procure a shred of his garment ; and it was with great difficulty that his body was carried through the throng of mourners to its last resting place, where it was deposited in the tomb of the bishops, his predecessors. Let us now return to Gregory, from whom we have digressed in following the career of Basil the Great.

From his quiet retreat in Pontus, he was called by Basil to go to Sasimes, an insignificant and unknown town in Cappadocia, and settle a difficulty which he had with the Bishop of Tyanes. Basil, thinking of the good of the Church, probably without a thought of the brilliant talents he was about to shut up in seclusion, had issued the order. This quite offended Gregory, to think that the Archbishop, out of his fifty bishoprics, would consign him to such a humiliating exile, and it was with great reluctance that he submitted. Losing his aged father in 374, and soon after his mother, the pious Nonna, he accepted the temporary government of the Church of Nazianzen, which his father had served for forty-five years. Many were the persecutions suffered by the orthodox Christians in Constantinople during the reign of Valens. They had almost died out, and it was found necessary to call some great champion into the field against the Arians. At the recommendation and request of a number of bishops,

Gregory was prevailed upon to come to the capital. In speaking of his entry into that second Rome, he says that his purpose must have appeared no less extraordinary than that of David when he opposed Goliath; that there could be no man more contemptible in the eyes of the world than he. Upon his arrival, he was entertained in the house of a pious and charitable kinsman. The most spacious room was consecrated to the uses of religious worship. To this he gave the name of Anastasia, or the Resurrection; because the Catholic faith seemed to have its resurrection in this particular spot. His success was astonishing. People ran in crowds to listen, and they sometimes even forced the balustrade of the choir in order to hear him more distinctly. There were no heretics of any sect whatever, nor even pagans, who did not listen to him with pleasure—some to imbibe his doctrine, others attracted by his thrilling eloquence; in fact, he was heard by all with unqualified admiration. The Anastasia was enlarged into a spacious church, and for two years its pulpit was the scene of his labors and triumphs. His success provoked the jealousy of the Arian party. They falsely represented to the people that Gregory preached the doctrine of three Gods, and the devout populace, headed by their leaders, undertook to suppress the assemblies of the eloquent

preacher. From the Cathedral of St. Sophia there issued a motley crowd of "common beggars, who had forfeited their claim to piety; of monks, who had the appearance of goats or satyrs, and of women, more terrible than so many Jezebels."

All these allies flocked to the Anastasia, broke down its doors, and entered while baptism was being administered. No little mischief was perpetrated by the use of sticks, stones, and fire-brands. They even sacrilegiously dashed down the sacred vessels of the altar, and then enthroned their bishop, Damophilus. Over the ruin they had made, some danced and drank wine; others carried their persecution still further. Several were wounded with stones, and one man was beaten to death in the midst of the city for boldly professing Christ. Even this did not satisfy them. They inflicted every imaginable outrage upon those who unwaveringly professed their faith. Such were driven from their houses and hunted in their retreats. Gregory they dragged like a malefactor before the magistrate, accusing him of being the cause of tumult and sedition; but he was acquitted of all the charges, and the persecutions which he experienced served only to increase the number of his followers. His already great celebrity increased, and St. Jerome came from a distance to visit him, and afterward boasted of having had

the honor of being his pupil. The Catholics were now sufficiently strong in number to lay claim to a bishop, and they unanimously declared their intention of conferring the honor on Gregory.

Maximus, an Egyptian cynic philosopher, whom he had himself recently baptized and received into the lower orders of the Church, being envious of his approaching honor, determined to rescue it for himself. This individual, by numerous intrigues, considerable boldness, and possibly not a few bribes, engaged some Egyptian bishops to assist him. Gregory, on account of illness, was obliged to quit the city and retire for a time into the country. The confederates of the envious conspirator, unwilling to lose their first opportunity, broke into the church during the first night, and placed Maximus upon the throne. The great body of the people, of all classes, were so indignant at this proceeding that they assembled, and, with the utmost fury, drove the intruders from the church, who were now obliged to consult their safety by flight. "This attempt to supplant him produced much uneasiness in the breast of Gregory, and made him very desirous of retirement; and, after a time, he determined to resign a charge which involved him in increasing troubles. He accordingly announced his intention to his people in a farewell discourse, in the course of which he

pathetically exhorted them to persevere in the orthodox faith which he had taught them, and to be mindful of the labors and sufferings he had undergone for that cause. No sooner had he finished his exhortation than he was surrounded by persons of all ages, sexes, and qualities, who were so earnest in their entreaties that he would remain, that at length he promised not to desert them till the Eastern bishops, who were expected soon to assemble at Constantinople, would release him by choosing a more worthy person to fill his place.”*

Just at this time, (380 A. D.,) Theodosius the Great was created a partner in the Imperial throne. The Catholics of Constantinople were filled with joy at his baptism, and his promise to restore them to their churches. He immediately avowed himself a supporter of the orthodox faith, and issued an edict commanding all his subjects to accept the doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning the Trinity. When he had finished his campaign, he made his public entry at the head of a victorious army. He greeted Gregory with the warmest tokens of esteem, and welcomed him to the Imperial city, telling him that God had sent him to give him possession of the Church, which he was ready to deliver up into his hands as a reward for his labors. A day was

* Rees's Cyclopaedia.

appointed for his installation; but at Gregory's request the ceremony was deferred. Theodosius summoned Damophilus, the Arian bishop, and offered him the severe alternative of subscribing to the Nicene faith or of instantly resigning to the orthodox believers the use and possession of the episcopal palace, the Cathedral of St. Sophia, and all the churches of Constantinople. The zealous prelate chose the latter, and retired to a life of exile. The people still clamored for Gregory as bishop, and he was obliged to send messages begging them to desist. He refused to submit until the Emperor, already overcome with admiration for his modesty, took him forcibly and placed him upon the arch-episcopal throne of the East. Into the hands of the great Gregory was transferred the control of a hundred churches in Constantinople alone. The zeal of the Emperor deprived the Arians of so much as a place to worship, and dealt with them as if they were traitors and infamous persons. On the day of installation the Church of St. Sophia was occupied by a large body of the Imperial Guards. The Emperor conducted Gregory through the streets in solemn triumph, and with his own hand respectfully placed him in his seat of office. "But the saint (who had not subdued the imperfections of human virtue) was deeply affected by the

mortifying consideration that his entrance into the fold was that of a wolf rather than a shepherd; that the glittering arms which surrounded his person were necessary for his safety; that he alone was the object of the imprecations of a great party, whom, as men and citizens, it was impossible for him to despise. He beheld the innumerable multitude of either sex, and of every age, who crowded the streets, the windows, and the roofs of the houses; he heard the tumultuous voice of rage, grief, and despair; and Gregory fairly confesses that on the memorable day of his installation the capital of the East wore the appearance of a city taken by storm and in the hands of a barbarian conqueror.”* He records what was considered by the orthodox as a manifestation of God’s pleasure. It was late in November, and the morning was exceedingly dark, and the sky densely clouded, but the sun broke forth and shone brilliantly upon the procession as it entered the church. Six weeks afterward Theodosius sent his lieutenant, Sapor, armed with the ample powers of a general, and a strong military force, to expel all Arian bishops, and their clergy, from the churches. Sapor, however, used such discretion, and, at the same time, such vigor, that he completed the object

* Gibbon, chap. xxvii.

of his commission without any bloodshed. About this time the Emperor, hoping to settle the much-contested doctrine of the Trinity, called the second Ecumenical Council to meet in Constantinople.

The number of bishops composing the assembly was one hundred and fifty. The first business performed by the Council was the confirmation of Gregory as bishop. He hoped even at this time to be freed alike from its duties and its honors; but, notwithstanding his tearful remonstrances, they refused to grant his request. It was not long, however, before our pure-minded and sober bishop was subjected to the envy and intrigue of that ever-malicious and adverse faction of the Egyptians. They determined his ruin, if it were possible, and "the pride or the humility of Gregory prompted him to decline a contest which might have been imputed to ambition or avarice; and he publicly offered, not without some mixture of indignation, to renounce the government of a Church which had been restored, and almost created, by his labors."* In the peroration to his resignation speech, with eloquence that might almost be called sublime, he takes a solemn leave of men and angels, the city and the Emperor, the East and the West,

* Gibbon.

forever.* The ingratitude of the Council is not to be wondered at, for "such unjust and disorderly proceedings forced the gravest members of the assembly to dissent and to secede; and the clamorous majority, which remained masters of the field of battle, could be compared only to wasps or magpies, to a flight of cranes, or to a flock of geese. A suspicion may possibly arise that so unfavorable a picture of ecclesiastical synods has been drawn by the partial hand of some obstinate heretic, or some malicious infidel; but the name of the sincere historian who has conveyed this instructive lesson to the knowledge of posterity, must silence the impotent murmurs of superstition and bigotry. But he was one of the most pious and eloquent bishops of the age—a saint and a doctor of the Church—the scourge of Arianism and the pillar of the orthodox faith—a distinguished member of the Council of Constantinople, in which, after the death of Meletius, he exercised the functions of president—in a word, Gregory Nazianzen himself."†

Gregory, after taking leave of the Council, retired to his former silent retreat in Cappadocia, where he devoted the remainder of his life, (about

* See Gregory's History of his own Life, xxxii Oration.

† Gibbon.

eight years,) in the exercises of piety and devotion. His piety was of the purest kind, and his benevolence and charity were boundless, for they led him to devote the whole of his income to the relief of the poor and afflicted. He died in 389, aged sixty-five years, an ornament to the age in which he lived. "The title of saint has been added to his name, but the tenderness of his heart, and the elegance of his genius, reflect a more pleasing luster on the memory of Gregory Nazianzen." *

* For brief and interesting biographies of Basil and Gregory, see Gibbon, M'Clintock and Strong's *Bib. Cyc.*, *Cyc. Brit.*, and Challoner's *Fathers of the Desert*, (Catholic,) and many others.





CHAPTER XII.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, THE "GOLDEN MOUTHED."



WE have come to take a look at John, the prince of Church Fathers. On account of the fluency and sweetness of his eloquence, he obtained, after his death, the surname of Chrysostom, or "golden mouth." But the tenderness of his nature, the piety alike of his youth and old age ; his undaunted zeal in the cause of virtue, and his untiring energy in the cause of humanity and charity, are titles far more glorious, by which he holds place at the head of the orators and bishops of the fourth and subsequent centuries. John was born about the year 344, at Antioch, the capital city of Syria. His family was both noble and opulent. He had one elder sister, and was the only son and heir of Secundus, master of the horse, or chief commander, of the imperial troops in Syria. His mother, Anthusa, was left a widow when only twenty years of age,

and continued such the remainder of her life. She might readily be termed a second Nonna. History has been so jealous of their fame that it has transmitted them side by side to posterity. The tender care that she exercised over her children, and her earnest devotion, made such an impression on her son's master, the most illustrious orator of the day, and a pagan, that he could not forbear crying out, "What wonderful women have the Christians!"

Eloquence being esteemed the highest accomplishment, especially among the nobility, and being the surest means of ascent to the first dignities in the State, Anthusa had her son study that art, under the celebrated Libanius, who soon discovered the extraordinary talents of his disciple. So great was his natural genius that even in his youth he excelled his masters. The world-renowned Libanius considered him his equal; for, on his death-bed, when asked who should succeed him in his school, he replied: "John, had not the Christians stolen him from us." The piety of Chrysostom soon led him to receive baptism, and quit the lucrative and honorable profession of the law for a life of self-humiliation and prayer. He determined to dedicate himself and his powers to God, without reserve, and, in lieu of his legal cloak, he put on a coarse, gray coat. He spent the greater

part of his time in studying the Scriptures, and in meditation, and especially in overcoming his passion for the vanities and glory of the world. Meletus, the Bishop of Antioch, called the young ascetic to the service of the Church by ordaining him reader, and, during three years, he studied under the instruction of that prelate at his own palace. At the end of this period, he expressed his desire to be a monk, but his mother would not consent to his entering a monastery. She told him to be a monk at home, which he at last consented to do.

While studying eloquence, John formed the acquaintance of a fellow-student named Basil, who, like Basil the Great to Gregory, seemed to be a very desirable companion for our young orator. This friend continued to visit him in his little monastery at home. They, together, prevailed upon two other fellow-students under Libanius to embrace an ascetic life—Theodorus, afterward Bishop of Mopsuestia, and Maximus, Bishop of Seleucia. The former fell from grace, and fell in love with a young lady at the same time. John lamented his fall, and prayed God to bring him back. He also addressed two pathetic exhortations to repentance to his friend, "which breathe an eloquence above the power of what seems merely human," says Sozomen. His solici-

itude was rewarded by the return of Theodorus. Soon after, hearing that the bishops of the province, then assembled at Antioch, contemplated raising him to the Episcopal dignity, he concealed himself until the chair was filled. His friend Basil, without his own consent, was made bishop of a neighboring city, and had no other resource, in his grief for his promotion, but in tears and complaints against his friend, whom he charged with having betrayed him into so perilous an office. John, who, at this time, was twenty-six years old, addressed six excellent books on the *priesthood* to Basil, which he wrote in his own justification. When thirty years old, he retired into the mountains near Antioch. There, in company with a number of anchorets, he devoted himself to pious reading, prayer, and meditating on the Scriptures. These men, who had torn themselves away from the allurements of the world, ate nothing but bread, with a little salt; some added a little oil—the same as that burned in their lamps—and those who were very weak took a few herbs, or pulse. No one ever ate before sunset, and it was not until after they had eaten that they were allowed to converse with each other. Anger, jealousy, grief, envy, and anxiety for worldly goods and concerns were unknown in these poor cells, and Chrysostom assures us that the constant

peace, joy, and pleasure which reigned in them were as different from the bitterness and tumultuous scenes of the most brilliant worldly felicity, as the security and calmness of the most agreeable harbor are from the dangers and agitation of the most tempestuous ocean. Four years Chrysostom passed under the conduct of an old Syrian monk, and two more in a cave alone, as a hermit. Illness compelled him to quit his monastic life; and, in 381, he was ordained deacon. In 384, Flavian the bishop, who was far advanced in age, made him priest, and constituted him his vicar and preacher. During the twelve years that he filled this important office, it seemed as if nothing could withstand the united power of his eloquence, zeal, and piety. He preached to the hundred thousand Christians of Antioch several days in the week, and sometimes several times on the same day. He was successful in abolishing the most inveterate abuses, repressed crime and vice; in fact, reformed that great and wicked city.

The Emperor Theodosius, finding it necessary to levy a new tax on his subjects, to defray the expenses of his war with Maximus, the usurper of the Western throne, the people of Antioch rebelled, and during a general riot, they discharged their rage upon the Emperor's statues, those of his father, and his own two sons, dragged them

through the streets with ropes, and broke them in pieces. When they had recovered from their fury, they began to consider their rashness, and many abandoned the city. The magistrates apprehended great numbers of them, and filled the prisons with citizens for trial. The fears of the already affrighted people were considerably heightened by the arrival of two of the Emperor's officers, who had come to execute punishment. The report was spread throughout the city that the guilty would be burned alive, and their estates confiscated, and that their insulted sovereign intended to level the rebellious city with the ground. The venerable Flavian, though feeble with age, and though his sister was dying when he left her, set out without delay, in the severest weather, to implore the Emperor's clemency in favor of his flock. Having arrived at the palace, and being admitted into the imperial presence, he stopped at a distance, and, holding down his head, covered his face with his hands and wept silently. His appearance was that of one who was himself guilty and pleaded for his own crime. The Emperor, seeing him thus pressed down under the weight of public guilt, instead of harshly reproaching him, as might have been expected, began and summed up the many favors he had conferred on Antioch, and concluded by saying: "Is this the

acknowledgment I had reason to expect? Is this their return for my love? What cause of complaint had they against me? Had I ever injured them? But, granting that I had, what can they allege for extending their insolence even to the dead? Had they received any wrong from them? Why were they to be insulted too? What tenderness have I not shown, on all occasions for their city? Is it not notorious that I have given it the preference in my love and esteem to all others, even to that which gave me birth? Did not I always express a longing desire to see it, and declare that it gave me the highest satisfaction to think I should soon be in a condition to take a journey for this purpose?"

The venerable bishop, stung by the gentle reproaches of the Emperor, and ashamed of his people, replied: "We acknowledge, sir, that you have, on all occasions, favored us with the greatest demonstrations of your singular affection; and this it is that enhances both our crime and our grief that we should have carried our ingratitude to such a pitch as to have offended our best friend and greatest benefactor; hence, whatever punishment you may inflict upon us, it will still fall short of what we deserve. But, alas! the evil we have done ourselves is worse than innumerable deaths; for what can be more afflicting than to live in the

judgment of all mankind, guilty of the blackest ingratitude, and to see ourselves deprived of your sweet and gracious protection, which was our bulwark? We dare not look any man in the face; no, not the sun itself. But, as great as our misery is, it is not irremediable; for it is in your power to remove it. Great affronts among private men have often been the occasion of great charity. When the devil's envy had destroyed man, God's mercy restored him. That wicked spirit, jealous of our city's happiness, has plunged her into this abyss of evils, out of which you alone can rescue her. It is your affection, I dare say it, which has brought them upon us, by exciting the jealousy of the wicked spirits against us. But, like God himself, you may draw infinite good out of the evil which they intended us. If you spare us, you are revenged on them. Your clemency on this occasion will be more honorable to you than your most celebrated victories. It will adorn your head with a far brighter diadem than that which you wear, as it will be the fruit only of your own virtue. Your statues have been thrown down; if you pardon this insult, you will raise yourself others—not of marble or brass, which time destroys, but such as will exist eternally in the hearts of all those who will hear of this action. Your predecessor, Constantine the Great,

when importuned by his courtiers to exert his vengeance on some seditious people that had disfigured his statues by throwing stones at them, did nothing more than stroke his face with his hand, and told them, smiling, that he did not feel himself much hurt. This, his saying, is in the mouths of all men, and a more illustrious trophy to his memory than all the cities which he built, than all the barbarous nations which he subdued. Remember your own memorable saying, when you ordered the prisons to be opened, and the criminals to be pardoned, at the feast of Easter: 'Would to God I were able in the same manner to open the graves and restore the dead to life!' That time has now come. Here is a city whose inhabitants are already dead, and is, as it were, at the gates of its sepulcher. Raise it, then, as it is in your power to do, without cost or labor. A word will suffice. Suffer it, by your clemency, to be still named among the living cities. It will then owe more to you than to its very founder. He built it small; you will raise it great and populous. To have preserved it from being destroyed by barbarians would not have been so great an exploit as to spare it on such an occasion as now offers. Neither is the preservation of an illustrious city the only thing to be considered; your own glory, and, above all, the honor of the Chris-

tian religion, are highly interested in this affair. The Jews and pagans, all barbarous nations—nay, the whole world, have their eyes fixed on you at this critical juncture ; all are waiting for the judgment you will pronounce. If it be favorable, they will be filled with admiration, and will agree to praise and worship that God who checks the anger of those who acknowledge no master upon earth, and who can transform men into angels ; they will embrace that religion which teaches such sublime morality. Listen not to those who will object that your clemency on this occasion may be attended with, and give encouragement to, the like disorders in other cities. That could only happen if you spared for want of power to chastise ; but whereas you do not divest yourself, by such an act of clemency, of this power, and as by it you endear and rivet yourself the more in the affections of your subjects, this, instead of encouraging such insults and disorders, will rather the more effectually prevent them. Neither immense sums of money, nor innumerable armies could ever have gained you so much the hearts of your subjects, and their prayers for your person and empire, as will this single action. And, if you stand fair for being such a gainer from men, what rewards may you not reasonably expect from God ? It is easy for a master

to punish, but rare and difficult to pardon. It will be extremely glorious to you to have granted this pardon at the request of a minister of the Lord ; and it will convince the world of your piety, in that you overlooked the unworthiness of his person, and respected only the power and authority of that Master who sent him. For, though deputed immediately by the inhabitants of Antioch to deprecate your just displeasure on this occasion, it is not only in their name that I appear in this place, for I am come from the sovereign Lord of men and angels, to declare to you in his name that if you pardon men their faults he will forgive you your sins. Call to mind, then, that dreadful day on which we shall all be summoned to give an account of all our actions. Reflect on your having it in your power, without pain or labor, to efface your sins, and to find mercy at that terrible tribunal. You are about to pronounce your own sentence. Other ambassadors bring gold, silver, and other presents ; but, as for me, I offer nothing but the law of God, and entreat you to imitate his example on the cross."

The eloquent and paternal bishop, so eager for the peace and safety of his city, closed his touching speech with no small degree of flattery. He assured the Emperor that if he refused to pardon the city, he would never again return to it, nor

look upon it as his country, which a prince of his humane disposition could not prevail upon himself to pardon. Touched by the tender words of the bishop, the Emperor, looking up with tears in his eyes, briefly replied: "If Jesus Christ, the Lord of all things, vouchsafed to pardon and pray for those very men that crucified him, ought I to hesitate to pardon them who have offended me, I, who am but a mortal man, like them, and servant of the same Master?"


The servant of God, overjoyed at his success, prostrated himself on the floor, and offered to spend Easter with Theodosius; but the Emperor told him to hasten back to Antioch and relieve his people of their anxiety. He immediately set out, and at the same time dispatched a courier before him with the Emperor's letter of pardon. The venerable bishop arrived before Easter, and it fell to the lot of his golden-mouthed orator to break the happy news to the expectant people. The introduction to this magnificent oration was composed by the bishop, the remainder by Chrysostom himself; and so grand was the address that he became the pride and wonder, not only of Antioch, but of the East.



CHAPTER XIII.

SKETCH OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

CONCLUDED.

HE fame of Chrysostom soon called him to a higher and more influential position in the Church. In the year 395 Theodosius, the Emperor, died, and was succeeded by Arcadius. The new Emperor was induced, two years later, upon the death of Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople, to procure the election of John to the patriarchate of the capital. Eutropius, his Prime Minister, was the principal actor in the affair. Through him Arcadius dispatched a secret order to the Count of the East enjoining him to send John to Constantinople by some stratagem. The strictest privacy was commanded, lest a disturbance should be raised by the people of Antioch, and their design be frustrated. The Count succeeded in enticing Chrysostom outside of the city walls to the tombs of the martyrs, under the pretense of devotion. He there delivered him

into the hands of an officer sent on purpose, who taking him into the chariot, conveyed him, with all possible speed, to the Imperial city.

The proud Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, had already arrived, and sought to place one of his own bishops upon the archiepiscopal throne. He used every means in his power, secretly and illegally, to prevent the election of Chrysostom, but fortunately was detected and threatened with accusation before a synod. It was much against his own will that John was consecrated, and raised to what was afterward claimed by the East to be the highest dignity in the Church. Although thus elevated, he continued in the practice of his rigid monastic virtues. "The ample revenues, which his predecessors had consumed in pomp and luxury, he diligently applied to the establishment of hospitals; and the multitudes who were supported by his charity preferred the eloquent and edifying discourses of their archbishop to the amusements of the theater or circus." In boldness of speech Chrysostom had no equal. He was fearless, and sometimes rash. Loudly and frequently he rebuked the young ladies of fashion for their shamelessness and immodesty in dress. Their disregard of decency in this corrupt age was a constant and intolerable scandal to the Church, but his irresistible eloquence made mod-

esty respectable and its opposite shameful; and scantiness in dress, as well as the miserable and disgusting practice of swearing, was, to a great extent, abandoned in Constantinople. Chrysostom's influence with the people, and even with the Emperor, was powerful. When Eutropius, the Prime Minister, who was originally a slave, had attained to the height of vanity and ambition, and his ruin, so long unsuspected by him, was impending, the bishop saved his life from the swords of the soldiery who surrounded the church, where he had fled for safety. Chrysostom proceeded to the Emperor, and begged that the unhappy criminal, who had insolently insulted the Empress, might be spared. So successful was his mission that the Emperor, with tears in his eyes, with the assistance of the bishop, prevailed upon the soldiers to withdraw. On the following day the infuriated people and soldiery returned, and again threatened the fugitive official with death, but, instead of performing their deed of blood, they were melted to tears by an eloquent and pathetic discourse of the bishop on the vanity and treachery of human things, the emptiness and falsehood of which he could not find a word emphatic enough to express. It was some days after this when Eutropius left the church, hoping to escape privately out of the city; but he was

seized and banished by the General Gainas, who was his enemy.

One of the principal reforms that engaged the attention of Chrysostom was that of his clergy. Encouraged by the pomp and splendor of the former archbishop they had fallen into a love of luxury and display. In their reformer they found a far different example. His life was almost a perfect model. He sold the costly furniture of the Episcopal palace, and at one time caused a quantity of the consecrated plate to be melted down and sold for the relief of the suffering. He condemned expenditures for sumptuous banquets, and himself took his repasts (the most frugal possible) alone. "The silent and solitary ascetics, who had excluded themselves from the world, were entitled to the warmest approbation of Chrysostom, but he despised, and stigmatized as the disgrace of their holy profession, the crowd of degenerate monks who, from some unworthy motives of pleasure or profit, so frequently infested the streets of the capital."

Upon hearing a complaint against the Bishop of Ephesus he started on a journey of visitation through the Asiatic provinces in the midst of a severe Winter, convened a Council at Ephesus, and finding the accused bishop guilty of the charge preferred against him, deposed him.

Councils were held in several of the neighboring cities, and no less than twelve other bishops were deprived of their respective sees by the virtuous and impartial archbishop. He was even so rash as once to declare it as his free opinion that the number of bishops who might be saved bore a very small proportion to those who would be lost. The fearlessness of speech, and rigidity of the pastoral labors of the archbishop, provoked and gradually united against him two potent enemies—the aspiring clergy, who were envious of his grand success, and the obstinate, and especially opulent sinners, whom he constantly reproved for their vices. “When Chrysostom thundered from the pulpit of St. Sophia against the degeneracy of the Christians, his shafts were spent among the crowd without wounding, or even making the character of any individual.” The magistrates, the ministers, the ladies of the Court, and the Empress Eudoxia herself, were not spared in his public exposures of guilt. He assumed the right of exposing both offense and offender from his pulpit. Severianus, Bishop of Gabala, to whom Chrysostom had left the care of his Church during his absence at Ephesus, had gained considerable reputation as a preacher, and had become a particular favorite of the Empress Eudoxia. He had the audacity to preach

against the archbishop in his own city. Zosimus, the pagan historian, says of the empress, that "her flagrant avarice, her extortions and injustices, knew no bounds, and that the Court was filled with informers, calumniators, and harpies, who, being always on the watch for prey, found means to seize the estates of such as died rich, and to disinherit their children or other heirs." And such was the Court that Chrysostom, who feared only God, was compelled, in discharging his duty, to lift up his voice against and condemn.

He had preached a sermon against the extravagance and vanity of women in dress and pomp, which was pretended by some to have been leveled at the Empress. Severianus, thinking this an opportunity, made use of it, by fanning the flame of indignation and anger that had already been kindled in the mind of Eudoxia. By her invitation the haughty and turbulent Theophilus, of Alexandria, landed at Constantinople with a strong body of Egyptian mariners, to encounter the populace and a train of dependent bishops, who should form the majority in a synod which he convened in the suburbs of Chalcedon, called *The Oak*, from a large tree that gave the name to that quarter of the town. At this synod forty-seven different heads of impeachment, the

most frivolous in their nature, were read against him. Chrysostom himself held a Council of forty bishops at St. Sophia, and refused the four successive summons demanding his appearance at the Council of *The Oak*, whereupon they deposed him, and reported to the Emperor that he had been guilty of comparing the Empress to Jezebel, and that he might easily be accused of treason. The Emperor issued an order of immediate banishment, but the people, infuriated, opposed ; and, had it been the desire of their bishop, could easily have prevented the execution of the sentence. He, meekly submitting, made them a farewell sermon, in which he addressed them as follows :

“Violent storms encompass me on all sides, yet I am without fear, because I stand upon a rock. Though the sea roar, and the waves rise high, they can not sink the vessel of Jesus. I fear not death, which is my gain, nor banishment, for the whole earth is the Lord’s ; nor the loss of goods, for I came naked into the world, and must leave it in the same condition. I despise all the terrors of the world, and trample upon its smiles and favor. Nor do I desire to live, unless for your service. Christ is with me ; whom shall I fear ? Though waves rise against me, though the sea, though the fury of princes threaten me—all these are to me more contemptible than a spider’s web.

I always say, O Lord, may thy will be done—not what this or that creature wills, but what it shall please thee to appoint, that shall I do and suffer with joy. This is my strong tower—this is my unshaken rock—this is my staff that can never fail. If God be pleased that it be done let it be so. Wheresoever his will is that I be—I return him thanks.”

On the third day after he received his sentence, in order to prevent any disturbance, he delivered himself up secretly to a messenger of the Emperor, who rudely hurried him through the city, and landed him, after a short navigation, in his place of exile, near the entrance of the Euxine, from whence, before two days, he was recalled, only to be honored more than he had been degraded.

At the first news of his exile the people were so astonished as to be altogether inactive; but when the enemies of their bishop entered the city, and Severianus mounted the pulpit of St. Sophia for the purpose of justifying the exile of Chrysostom, they suddenly rose with unanimous and irresistible fury. Theophilus and his audacious preacher escaped. Both would have been thrown into the sea had the infuriated mob found them; but the promiscuous crowd of monks and Egyptian mariners was slaughtered without pity.

in the streets of Constantinople. That night an earthquake shook the city; and the avengers of injustice, assured that Heaven had seconded their movement on the side of right, ventured to turn their wrath on the Empress herself. In wild confusion the torrent of sedition rolled toward the gates of the palace, and Eudoxia, filled with the greatest consternation, threw herself at the feet of the Emperor, crying out, "Unless John be recalled our empire is undone!" And with his consent, she sent letters the same night to the bishop, falsely protesting that she was ignorant of his banishment, and inviting him home with tender expressions of affection and esteem. The Bosphorus was covered with innumerable vessels, the shores of Europe and Asia were profusely illuminated, and the acclamations of a victorious people, accompanied from the port to the Cathedral the triumph of the archbishop, who too easily consented to re-assume the exercise of his functions before his sentence had been legally reversed by an ecclesiastical synod.

This glorious return to the Imperial city was but a very brief one. Chrysostom, who was bolder in his denunciation of evil than ever, soon found occasion to condemn the profane honors and public games that were celebrated about the silver statue of the Empress that had just been

erected, almost in the precincts of St. Sophia. The vanity of the Empress was easily inflamed by some enemies of the bishop, who invented the infamous exordium of a sermon, "Herodias is again furious; Herodias again dances; she once more requires the head of John," which they reported him to have uttered. His enemies were again invited back; but the cowardly Theophilus, fearful of his head, durst not come. He sent three deputies, who took with them bishops enough to form a Council, which, without considering or examining into the justice of the former sentence, confirmed it. When the sentence of this second and final banishment was received by the worthy prelate he was officiating in the church, and, with the greatest calmness, he announced his sentence, and said: "Come, let us pray and take leave of the angel of the Church." Bidding the bishops farewell he retired privately out of the church, and was conducted by Lucius, a brutish captain, into Bithynia, arriving at Nice in June, 404. He requested that he might be allowed to reside at Cyzicus, but the inexorable Empress assigned as his place of exile the remote and desolate town of Caucasus, among the ridges of Mount Taurus, in Lesser Armenia. She in her cruelty even offered promotion to the officers who conducted him to his remote prison,

if they would use him roughly enough to cause his death on the way; but, after a severe march of seventy days, fatigued and foot-sore, he arrived at Mount Taurus, where he was received by many friends, who kindly consoled him with their sympathies and prayers.

After his banishment a series of calamities fell upon Constantinople. The very night that followed his departure the grand Cathedral of St. Sophia, the stately and magnificent Senate-house, and many other adjoining buildings of splendor, were burned to the ground. With the Senate-house perished the trophies of war and the works of art that were then the pride of the Empire of the East. Among the rest were the incomparable statues of the Muses from Helicon. Six months later the wicked Empress herself died. Her death was followed by a hail-storm so furious that the most dreadful havoc was made with every manner of property in the city. But the character of Chrysostom was "consecrated by absence and persecution. The faults of his administration were no longer remembered, but every tongue repeated the praises of his genius and virtue, and the respectful attention of the Christian world was fixed on a desert spot among the mountains of Taurus." From his lonely solitude the archbishop kept up a constant correspond-

ence with the most distant provinces, his mind more active than ever—exhorted his faithful adherents to persevere in their allegiance, to destroy the temples of Phœnicia, and to extirpate the heresy in the Island of Cyprus. He communicated with the Pope and Honorius, the Emperor of the West, and on one occasion boldly appealed from the decision of a partial synod to the supreme authority of a General Council. Though the Emperor had imprisoned the body of Chrysostom, he was unable to imprison his independent mind. The illustrious exile continued to render his persecutor uneasy by his reproofs and reproaches, until an order was dispatched for his removal to Pytius, a town situated on the Euxine Sea, at the extremity of the Empire, on the frontiers of the most barbarous of the Scythians. His guards, faithful to their instructions for the infliction of all manner of cruelty, compelled him to walk all day and most of the night with his bare head exposed alike to snow and rain, until they had reached Comana, where he died, A. D. 407, from fatigue and exposure, in the sixtieth year of his age. “The succeeding generation acknowledged his innocence and merit. The archbishops of the East, who might blush that their predecessors had been the enemies of Chrysostom, were gradually disposed, by the firmness of the

Roman Pontiff, to restore the honors of that venerable name." Thirty years afterward his remains were transported to the royal city, and deposited in the Church of the Apostles, the burying-place of the emperors and bishops. His ashes were afterward carried to Rome, and are now said to rest under an altar bearing his name in the Vatican Church.

He is styled by many of the old writers as the "illustrious Doctor of Churches, whose glory shines on every side, who fills the earth with the light of his profound, sacred learning, and who instructs by his works the remotest corners of the earth, preaching every-where, even where his voice could not reach."

We see in John Chrysostom the forerunner of Luther and Whitefield, Wesley and Beecher. He certainly is the grandest character in the history of the Church. It is unnecessary for us to delineate his character, when his life is the plainest exhibition of it. The best that we can do is to imitate, as well as admire John, the Golden-Mouthed.

NOTE.—In the preparation of this brief biography of Chrysostom we are considerably indebted to Challoner's (Roman Catholic) *Fathers of the Desert*, and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, besides having carefully examined Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and others.



CHAPTER XIV.

SIMEON STYLITES.

WE will conclude our biographical sketches of the Fathers of Church and Desert with that of Simeon Stylites, who surpassed all others in the useless and painful abuse of the body God gave him. The *others* we have brought forward for your admiration and respect; Simeon we present to you only for your amusement and wonder. While we can, without hesitation, pronounce him a religious fanatic, we can not deny that he performed many of the most surprising acts of painful self-denial. He did not stop at this, but was a real genius, and an inventor of new and unheard-of modes of torture, which he practiced upon himself. Many incredible things are told of him which are only traditionary and legendary; yet the general history of his life is authenticated by contemporary writers, such as Theodoret, Evagrius, and others, whom we can not

doubt. Theodoret, the great historian, who undertook, while Simeon was still living, to commit to his manuscript a faithful account of this wonder of the world, tells us that he is afraid that he shall seem, to succeeding ages, to have delivered to them a fabulous rather than a true history. This prince of hermits was born, toward the close of the fourth century, at Sisan, upon the confines of Syria and Cilicia. In his youth he was a shepherd, and cared for his father's sheep. When thirteen years old, he attended a church where he heard a sermon from the text: "Blessed are they that mourn." (Matt. v, 4.) Much affected by it, he inquired of a friend what he should do. Upon being advised to enter a monastery, he immediately forsook his home, and went and prostrated himself at the gate of one situated in his own neighborhood. After three days of fasting and prostration, the abbot admitted him. Here he remained about two years, practicing the most severe penances and fasts, even surpassing the oldest monks in humility. At the close of this novitiate he went to the monastery of Teleda. Here he began the practice of austerities that well prepared him for the life of exposure he afterward lived. It is said of him that instead of eating once a day, as did the other monks, he only ate once a week. Having made a rope of palm

leaves, so hard and impliable that it could scarcely be handled, he tied it around his waist, under his clothing, so tightly that it forced its way into the flesh until it was almost covered. His suffering he took the greatest precaution to conceal ; but it was at last discovered by his fellows. The abbot refused to allow him to practice such a self-torture, and, after no little difficulty, and the greatest pain to Simeon, he succeeded in disengaging it from the flesh. When he had served ten years in this, his religious home, during which time he had been saved a number of times from pious suicide, he removed his residence to a mountain about thirty or forty miles east of Antioch. On the side of this mountain he made a hut, in which he often continued fasting several days at a time. One of the most incredible stories is recorded of him while he dwelt in this hut. He conceived the idea of fasting without taking any food during the forty days of Lent. With this purpose in mind he desired Bassus, the ecclesiastical superior of that district, to wall up the door of his cell, so that he could not go out for food if he desired to. Bassus remonstrated with him that, instead of being an act of virtue, it would be a grievous crime for him thus to endanger his life. He afterward brought ten loaves of bread and a pitcher of water to Simeon, and then walled up the cell

as he had desired. Forty days after the time that he had thus imprisoned the fanatical saint he returned, and, having opened the door, found Simeon lying extended on the floor, as if he were dead, with the ten loaves and water untouched. Finding life still remaining in him, Bassus cared for him until he was wholly restored. This fast of forty days, during Lent, without eating or drinking any thing whatever, from this time forward to the year of his death, he annually observed.

The above story is, in our opinion, unreasonable, although it is a tradition of the Romish Church. We have not yet cultivated our credulity sufficiently to believe it. Soon after this, our anchoret ascended to the top of the mountain, and there made for himself an inclosure of stones, without any covering, in which he remained for some years, taking no other nourishment than boiled lentils and water, and, by means of a ponderous chain, one end of which he fastened around his right ankle, and the other to a great stone, he confined himself to these narrow limits. The fame of Simeon's sanctity became so universal that crowds flocked to him daily, imploring his blessing. Their numbers, which continued to increase, became a great disturbance to him, and he determined to build a pillar and live upon that. So, in the year

526, he erected one nine feet high, and ascended it. This, by his own labor, and that of his friends, was raised to eighteen feet, thirty-three feet, and finally to sixty feet in height. "In this last and lofty station the Syrian anchoret resisted the heat of thirty Summers, and the cold of as many Winters. Habit and exercise instructed him to maintain his dangerous situation without fear or giddiness, and successively to assume the different postures of devotion. He sometimes prayed in an erect attitude, with his arms outstretched in the figure of a cross; but his most familiar practice was that of bending his meager skeleton from the forehead to the feet; and a curious spectator, after numbering twelve hundred and forty-four repetitions, at length desisted from the endless account. The progress of an ulcer in his thigh might shorten, but it could not disturb, this *celestial* life."*

He often remained for some length of time bowed down with his forehead upon the pillar, and this it is probable is the position in which he slept, as the top of his aerial pedestal had not a sufficient diameter to permit him to lie down. Theodoret informs us that multitudes from all quarters flocked to his pillar. From Britain to Spain, from Gaul to Arabia they journeyed for

* Gibbon, chap. xxxvii.

the purpose of claiming his benediction. Twice each day he preached to them; and the same author, whose authority is unquestionable, tells us that Simeon wrought great and evident miracles in his presence.

Now, we are not prepared either to deny or affirm that miracles were wrought by God, through human agency, after the times of the apostles. If there were any, they must have been in response to earnest prayer, and not by any power deputed to the persons themselves, as was the case with the apostles. God may have heard the prayers of such righteous men as Simeon in these times, who, though mistaken as to the manner in which God is to be served, was sincere, even to the sacrifice of the necessities of a mere subsistence. The apostle James has recorded (v, 16): "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

The Saracens came to Simeon in companies of two and three hundred, and cast down their idols at the foot of his pillar. They even disputed in arms the honor of his benediction. Thousands of heathen, as well as heretical Christians, were converted by his wonderful preaching.

Alfred Tennyson, in his poem on St. Simeon, has put this beautiful and modest speech in his mouth:

"Good people, you do ill to kneel to me ;
 What is it I have done to merit this ?
 I am a sinner viler than you all.
 It may be I have wrought some miracles,
 And cured some halt and maimed ; but what of that ?
 It may be no one, even among the saints,
 May match his pains with mine ; but what of that ?
 Yet do not rise ; for you may look on me,
 And, in your looking, you may kneel to God.
 Speak ! is there any of you halt or maimed ?
 I think you know I have some power with heaven
 From my long penance ; let him speak his wish.
 Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me,
 They say that they are healed ; Ah, hark ! they shout
 ' St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
 God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
 Can I work miracles and not be saved ?
 This is not told of any. They were saints.
 It can not be but that I shall be saved ;
 Yea, crowned a saint. They shout, ' Behold a saint !'
 And lower voices saint me from above.
 Courage, St. Simeon ! This dull chrysalis
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope, ere death,
 Spreads more, and more, and more, that God hath now
 Spanged, and made blank of crimeful record, all
 My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
 Stylites among men ; I, Simeon,
 The watcher on the column till the end ;
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes ;
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
 Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now,
 From my high nest of penance, here proclaim
 That Pontius and Iscariot, by my side,
 Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
 A vessel full of sin : all hell beneath
 Made me boil over."

.

"God, only through his bounty, hath thought fit
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come—yea, even now,
Now, now his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
Of life—I say that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without reproach ;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones
When I am gathered to the glorious saints.
While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shriveling through me, and a cloud-like change
In passing, with a grosser film, made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end ! the end !
Surely the end ! What 's here ? a shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown ? Come, blessed brother, come.
I know thy glittering face. I waited long :
My brows are ready. What ! deny it now ?
Nay, draw, draw nigh. So, I clutch it. Christ !
'T is gone : 't is here again : the crown ! the crown !
So how 't is fitted on, and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet ! sweet ! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
Ah ! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints : I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for heaven.
Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament ;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people ; let them take
Example, pattern : lead them to thy light."

Whether Simeon died that night is uncertain, and, if he did, this nicely wrought poetical prophecy was not heeded, for he remained dead two days before the calamity was discovered. He was observed by the multitude who waited his exhortation and blessing to be in a kneeling position, with his head down. They supposed that he was continuing in prayer, as he sometimes did, during the entire day. The day of his death was on a Friday, and it was the following Sunday afternoon that his disciple, Antonius, ascended the pillar by means of a ladder, and discovered that he was dead. Antonius immediately descended, and gave notice, privately, to the patriarch of Antioch and the governor of the province. The Archbishop, in company with the Master-General of the East, six bishops, twenty-one counts, or tribunes, and six thousand soldiers, transported his remains in solemn procession from the mountain of Teleuissa to Antioch, and that city "revered his bones as her glorious ornament and impregnable defense."

Thus much for Simeon Stylites. Peace be to his ashes! His life was noble, in its way; but God is a spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.



CHAPTER XV.

OBSERVATIONS ON MONASTICISM.



AFTER having followed the lives of some of the most prominent monks, it is hardly necessary for us to say much as to their manner of living. A few observations, however, may not be out of place.

In a previous chapter, we have given the cause of the foundation of monasticism. The desert was the only security from the evil and temptations to which an earnest and sincere Christian was subject. "Thither had they fled out of cities, compared with which Paris is earnest and Gomorrah chaste—out of a rotten, infernal, dying world of tyrants and slaves, hypocrites and wantons—to ponder undisturbed on duty and on judgment, on death and eternity, heaven and hell; to find a common creed, a common interest, a common hope, common duties, pleasures, and sorrows. True, they had, many of them, fled from the post

where God had placed them, when they fled from man into the Thebiad waste.”* Egypt was certainly the home of the monks, and that people gloried in the marvelous revolution that had taken place in their land, and even were proud to boast that the number of the monks was equal to the remainder of the people. The vows taken by the fugitive from sin, upon his entrance into religious exile, were obedience, poverty, and chastity. The first was tested by some absurd and frequently almost criminal trial by the capricious abbot. He very frequently commanded the penitents to jump from windows, and then caught them as they were in the act of fulfilling the command. “They were directed to remove an enormous rock; assiduously to water a barren staff, that was planted in the ground, till at the end of three years it should vegetate and blossom like a tree; to walk into a fiery furnace; or to cast their infant into a deep pond; and several saints, or madmen, have been immortalized in monastic story by their thoughtless and fearless obedience.”

The dress of a monk varied in different countries. Those of Egypt wore only a ragged sheepskin, bound around the body by a belt, or girdle, and strapped over the shoulders. This left the lower limbs entirely bare, and no sandals were

* Charles Kingsley, jr., (*Hypatia*, chap. i).

worn, except in Winter. The head, from which the hair had been cut closely, or shaven, was wrapped in a cowl, to prevent the observation of profane objects. This was only worn when they were absent from their cell. A long staff completed the scanty outfit of these lords of the desert. The ancient monasteries were usually a number of rude cells constructed of the slightest material sometimes, and sometimes of stone. These were built in regular order, so as to give the appearance of a village, with streets and a wall. Within this wall, all the huts were inclosed ; also, a church, a hospital, a garden, and a fountain, or a spring of water. They usually slept on the hard floor of their respective cells, and the same bundle of palm leaves which served for a seat during the day served also as a pillow at night.

The gardens and fields which they rescued from the sands of the desert were the result of the severest toil. They conveyed soil upon their shoulders from the banks of the Nile, and spread it out upon the burning, barren waste to a sufficient depth to hold moisture. Through these gardens they dug a ditch in which a stream ran from the river, often for miles. By their constant care, these little artificial oases became as fertile as the plains of lower Egypt. Besides the cultivation of their common garden, from which the common



A MONK OF THE DESERT.

supply of the monastery was procured, they spent their time in the exercise of the several trades that were necessary to provide for their wants which could not be supplied by the produce of the soil. Day after day, and week after week they sat silently weaving palm leaves into mats or baskets. The wooden sandals, worn by the common people of the numerous Egyptian cities, were manufactured by the monks. "The superfluous stock, which was not consumed in domestic use, supplied by trade the wants of the community; the boats of Tabenna, and the other monasteries of Thebais, descended the Nile as far as Alexandria, and, in a Christian market, the sanctity of the workman might enhance the intrinsic value of the work."

The life of the monk was one of constant worship. He was not even allowed, by the rules of the institution of which he was a member, to *think* of any thing else but heaven, his own sin, and the judgment. The whole community of monks were assembled twice every twenty-four hours for worship in the chapel. This public worship was conducted in the evening about sunset, and again at midnight. The precise moment of this nocturnal devotion was determined by an observer who carefully watched the planets always visible in that cloudless Southern sky. The faith-

ful devotees were aroused from their slumber by the blast of a rustic horn, or trumpet, that twice each day disturbed the else unbroken silence of the desert. They seldom left their monastery alone. Two always went together to watch each other's actions, and when they returned they were commanded to *forget*, or at least keep perfectly silent about what they had seen or heard, except in the presence of the abbot or some of the elder monks. "The monastic slave might not receive the visits of his friends or kindred, and it was deemed highly meritorious if he afflicted a tender sister or an aged parent by the obstinate refusal of a word or look." (Gibbon.) Probably the strictest command that was enforced in many of the monasteries, especially upon young monks, was that they should never look at a woman. Pior, an Egyptian monk, allowed his sister to see him, but he shut his eyes during the whole visit.

We have not mentioned this subject until now in order that we might speak of it more particularly. We know no better illustration on this subject of monastic rigidity than that found in the first chapter of Kingsley's *Hypatia*. The scene at which the conversation noted below took place was the Laura of Abbot Pambo at Scetis, some three hundred miles above Alexandria. A young monk, Philammon by name, who had lost his par-

ents in his childhood, and had been raised by the venerable abbot, was sent in search of fuel, which was becoming quite scarce in that vicinity. He had wandered far and gathered but little, until going a little beyond his usual ramble he turned a pass in the glen. Suddenly he saw a temple in the sand-stone cliff, and in front a plain strewn with timbers and tools, that were originally used in the erection of that grand monument to "the grave of a dead nation in a dying land." The abbot had forbidden him from childhood ever to look into one of these ruined vestiges of heathendom; but temptation led him on, and, as he looked, he saw the magnificent statuary wrought in marble, pillar after pillar and vista after vista, and on the walls, in crimson and blue, the pictures of triumphs—ladies, the first he had ever seen, their heads crowned with garlands, and children playing by the slaves who nursed them, and dancing girls in transparent robes and golden girdles—a scene wonderfully strange to our young monk. His soliloquy we have not space to notice, but we will observe what transpires upon his return to the friendly Laura.

"'Thou art late, son,' said the abbot, steadfastly working away at his palm basket, as Philammon approached.

"'Fuel is scarce, and I was forced to go far.'

“‘A monk should not answer till he is questioned. I did not ask the reason. Where didst thou find that wood?’

“‘Before the temple, far up the glen.’

“‘The temple! What didst thou see there?’

“No answer. Pambo looked up with his keen, black eyes. ‘Thou hast entered it, and lusted after its abominations.’

“‘I—I did not enter; but I looked——’

“‘And what didst thou see? Women?’

“Philammon was silent.

“‘Have I not bidden you never look on the face of a woman? Are they not the first-fruits of the devil, the authors of all evil, the subtlest of all Satan’s snares? Are they not accursed forever for the deceit of their first mother, by whom sin entered into the world? A woman first opened the gates of hell, and, until this day, they are the portresses thereof. Unhappy boy, what hast thou done!’

“‘They were but painted on the walls.’

“‘Ah!’ said the abbot, as if suddenly relieved of a heavy burden. ‘But how knewest thou them to be women, when thou hast never yet, unless thou liest—which I believe not of thee—seen the face of a daughter of Eve?’

“‘Perhaps—perhaps,’ said Philammon, as if suddenly relieved by a new suggestion—‘perhaps

they were only devils. They must have been, I think, for they were so very beautiful!

“‘Ah! how knowest thou that devils are beautiful?’

“‘I was launching the boat a week ago, with father Anfugus; and, on the bank—not very near—there were two creatures—with long hair, and striped all over the lower part of their bodies with black, and red, and yellow—and they gathered flowers on the shore. Father Anfugus turned away; but I—I could not help thinking them the most beautiful things that I had ever seen—so I asked him why he turned away; and he said that those were the same sort of devils which tempted the blessed St. Anthony. Then I recalled having heard it read aloud how Satan tempted Anthony in the shape of a beautiful woman—and so—and so—those figures on the wall were very like—and I thought they might be—.’ And the poor boy, who considered that he was making confession of a deadly and shameful crime, blushed scarlet, and stammered, and at last stopped.

“‘And thou thoughtest them beautiful? O, utter corruption of the flesh! O, subtlety of Satan! The Lord forgive thee, as I do, my poor child; henceforth thou goest not beyond the garden walls.’

“Not beyond the walls! Impossible! I can not! If thou wert not my father I would say, I will not! I must have liberty! I must see for myself; I must judge for myself what this world is, of which you talk so bitterly. I long for no pomps and vanities. I will promise you this moment, if you will, never to re-enter a heathen temple—to hide my face in the dust whenever I approach a woman; but I must, I must see the world; I must see the great Mother Church in Alexandria, and the patriarch and his clergy. If they can serve God in the city, why not I? I could do more for God there than here.’ . . .

“Desperately and breathlessly did Philammon drive this speech out of his inmost heart, and then waited, expecting the good abbot to strike him on the spot. If he had, the young man would have submitted patiently; so would any man, however venerable, in that monastery. . .

. . . Why not? Duly, after long companionship, thought, and prayer, they had elected Pambo for their abbot, abba, father—the wisest, eldest hearted and headed of them. If he was that, it was time he should be obeyed. . . . And obeyed he was, with a royal, reasonable love, and with an implicit, soldier-like obedience, which many a king and conqueror might envy. Were they cowards and slaves? The Roman legion-

aries should be good judges on that point. . . . They used to say that no armed barbarian, Goth or Vandal, Moor or Spaniard, was so terrible as the unarmed monk of the Thebais.

“Twice the old man lifted his staff to strike ; twice he laid it down again ; and then slowly rising, left Philammon kneeling there, and moved away deliberately, and with eyes fixed on the ground, to the house of the brother Anfugus.

“‘The Lord’s voice be obeyed!’ (said the Father Anfugus to Philammon.) ‘Thou shalt go! Here are letters to Cyril the patriarch. He will love thee for my sake, and for thine own sake too, I trust. Thou goest of our free will, as well as thine own. The abbot and I have watched thee long, knowing that the Lord had need of such as thee elsewhere. We did but prove thee, to see by thy readiness to obey whether thou wert fit to rule. Go ; God be with thee. Covet no man’s gold or silver. Neither eat flesh nor drink wine, but live as thou hast lived—a Nazarite of the Lord. Fear not the face of man ; but look not upon the face of a woman. In an evil hour came they into the world, the mothers of all mischiefs which I have seen under the sun. Come ; the abbot waits for us at the gate.’”

It is unnecessary for us to follow Philammon

further. We have had more than enough already of this conversation to give us a fair idea of the unnatural principles that were the foundation stones of Monasticism. Monasteries were founded for women almost as soon as those for men, and thousands flocked to their solitude. The noble Roman matron, as well as the maid, left home, and friends, and fortune, to become the "*spouse of Christ*," as they were profanely termed. The wives of Senators forsook their magnificent palaces and villas, and sold their treasures, in order that they might raise up to their memory a sacred monument in the desert. Many did it from worldly desires and temptations, to acquire public fame. Malina, who sold all her silver-plate, weighing three hundred pounds, and presented it to one of the venerable abbots of Egypt, received an appropriate rebuke from the humble father who welcomed his visitor, but took no notice of the present she gave him. She, feeling uneasy lest he might not know the value of her silver, and the worthiness of her gift, took special care to acquaint the abbot with its weight. "Do you offer it to me or to God?" said he. "If to God, HE who suspends the mountains in a balance needs not to be informed of the weight of your plate."

Dear reader, it is our happy fortune to be

obliged to leave the consideration and observation of the development of this grand, but mistaken system, before we behold its degeneracy; for, with the dawn of the fifth century, the purity and luster that shone from these oases in the desert, these light-houses on a barren coast, gradually died away, and in later ages we can only liken their shadow to that of outer darkness.

Truly a great change had taken place in only four hundred years, and difficult, indeed, would it be for us to ascribe a revolution, in which the philosophic writings of Cicero were to be superseded by the sacred legends of Theodoret, and the character and life of Simeon to far eclipse that of Cato, to any other than a Divine agency, the work of a Divine hand. Soon the monasteries, that had been the redemption of a great part of the race from the vice and corruption of the world, became infected with the same disease they were intended to shut out. Personal and selfish motives "filled them with a crowd of obscure and abject plebeians, who gained in the cloister much more than they had sacrificed in the world. Peasants, slaves, and mechanics might escape from poverty and contempt to a safe and honorable profession, whose apparent hardships were mitigated by custom, by popular applause, and by the secret relaxation of discipline. The

subjects of Rome, whose persons and fortunes were made responsible for unequal and exorbitant tributes, retired from the oppression of the Imperial Government; and the pusillanimous youth preferred the penance of a monastic to the dangers of a military life. The affrighted provincials of every rank, who fled before the barbarians, found shelter and subsistence; whole legions were buried in these religious sanctuaries; and the same course which relieved the distress of individuals, impaired the strength and fortitude of the Empire."

The monk, who had been the very example of humility, now became the rude savage or the corrupt minister of a pure dispensation. Of all others the Nitrian monks were the most savage and uncivilized. From the great quarries and sand-heaps they came down to Alexandria, and infested its streets, until they had to be dealt with by the legionaries as if they were the common disturbers, not only of public quiet, but of public safety. That turbulent metropolis, which was ready to boil over in a minute, was easily excited by the midnight procession of the fiery bishop and his army of desperate and fanatical monks; and not unfrequently did an enraged bishop, who had degenerated from the virtue of his predecessors lead forth his band of savages

to a midnight chastisement of either Jews or heathens. But of all the evils growing out of this once pure soil, the superstitious belief in miracles said to be wrought by these "favorites of heaven," is the most obnoxious. They are reported to have cured inveterate diseases by a touch, a word, or a distant message. One of the old historians expresses the degree of reverence in which he holds the monks of Egypt, but "insults them with the remark that *they* never raised the dead; whereas the Bishop of Tours had restored three dead men to life." Stories the most preposterous imaginable, of miracles performed, not only by living monks, but by the relics of these dead saints, were presented to a credulous and superstitious people.

In the worship of the lives and miracles, and relics of the martyrs, and innumerable canonized saints, not only the grand lives and genuine miracles of the apostles were lost sight of, but the life and labors, the sorrows, and wonderful miracles of the Master himself were hidden in the multitude of supernatural wonders said to have been performed by mere men. And they were thus led to picture the Redeemer of mankind, in their venerative fancies, as one who was afar off, inaccessible, and unapproachable, except through the intercession of these saints, whom they de-

voutly revered. The result is easily discovered in the worship of the Virgin Mary. It seems to have been forgotten altogether by them that Jesus alone is our intercessor, who pleadeth for us with groanings that can not be uttered.

With these few remarks we close the second division. We have shown you the Gladiator and the Monk—two characters as opposite as ever lived on the face of the earth at the same time. The contrast between them we leave for you to draw. The account of Telemachus, the monk, as well as the last Gladiatorial Show, we reserve for a future chapter.

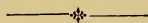


PART III.

THE GOTHIC WAR,
And the Last Gladiatorial Show.



THE GOTHIC WAR, AND THE LAST GLADIATORIAL SHOW.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE GOTH S.



IT is now our duty to pass from the history of the ministers of peace to that of the stern heroes of a warlike race. Before entering upon this division of our subject let us inquire into the early national life of that race of giants who afterward broke the Roman power, sacked the capital, and reigned in Gaul, Spain, and Italy. The great Scandinavian peninsula, thirteen hundred miles farther north than the capital of our country, history assigns as the father-land of the Goths. Although a people whose native honor would lead them to scorn the barbarities of the gladiatorial combat, it is a

remarkable coincidence that their histories begin together. Back to the 250th year B. C. is as far as we can trace them ; but truly we find a race such as the world has never known beside them. The rigidity of their Northern climates engendered the warlike spirit for which they were noted. The chief employment of the Goths was rather the hunt than the chase, for, instead of timid deer for their prey, their savage antagonist was usually the grizzly bear of the mountains or the wild boar of the forest. Inured to hardships from their youth, these barbarians, whose culture was a practice in the skillful use of the sword, found little pleasure except in casting the javelin, leveling the spear, and riding the war horse. It appears that love of conquest led the Goths to forsake the land of their nativity, to cross the Baltic, and seek a temporary home along the shores of the Black Sea. When this migration took place we can not say, as they seem to have disappeared from history for a time, in order that they might figure the more brilliantly upon their re-appearance on a grander stage of action.

Soon after the beginning of the third century they were encountered by the Emperor Caracalla. In 244 they conquered the provinces of Dacia and Thrace, and, six years later, destroyed the whole Roman army, and killed the Emperor Decius in

battle. The Goths were the avowed enemies of the Romans ; so much so that we may almost be warranted in saying God had raised them up for the destruction of the Imperial city.

How true this may be we are not prepared to say ; but we find them harassing the legions of the Empire, and making inroads upon its territory, and sacking its cities, up to the year 367, when, at their own request, the Emperor allowed a million of them to cross the Danube and settle within the Empire. Some time previous to this they had divided into two nations, known as the Ostrogoths (East Goths) and the Visigoths (West Goths). The Visigoths alone were permitted to cross the Danube. The Ostrogoths soon afterward came with the same request, but were refused—it not being deemed safe by the Senate to allow the settlement of so many barbarian warriors within the Empire. The inhuman treatment received by the Visigoths at the hands of the Romans, soon aroused not only their worthy indignation, but their hatred of oppression, which resulted in a three years' war, and the terrible battle of Adrianople, where the Emperor Valens lost his life. They then proceeded Northward, and chose the Julian Alps for their settlement. From these fastnesses they occasionally sallied forth to plunder the adjoining provinces. The

Government, however, finding that it was impossible to subdue these formidable barbarians, at last formed a plan of winning them over, and amalgamating whole swarms of Goths, who entered the Imperial armies, and were of considerable service. Their already great nation was constantly increased by the arrival of kindred tribes from the North. The Ostrogoths, who were denied their request to settle within the Empire, enforced that request by the use of arms, in which they proved successful. The Goths generally were of gigantic stature, and so bold and entirely fearless in battle, that they became the terror of the terrible Roman legions. Their massive armor was impenetrable by the Roman lances, and their heavy swords, the pride and strength of their nation, readily shattered in pieces the helmets and breastplates of the legionaries. Their women were as noble and heroic as they—the mothers of a bold and heroic race—and it was not until the Goths had intermarried with the degenerate Romans that they lost their valor.

The religion of the Goths, of course, was paganistic. They had no means of accepting any other than that which they manufactured themselves. Their God was called Odin, who was said to reside at Asgard. Who Odin was, or where Asgard, his sacred city, was situated, is a

mystery. However, more than one beautiful legend is told of him. Odin is said to have migrated from the East, but from what country, or what people, is not certainly known. His achievements are magnified beyond all credibility. He is represented as the god of battles, and as slaughtering thousands at a blow. At the city of Asgard he is said to have three palaces. The first is his great council chamber. From the top of the second he could see the whole world; and the third is called Valhalla, in which, according to the legend, the souls of heroes who had bravely fallen in battle, enjoy supreme felicity. They spend the day in mimic hunting matches or imaginary combats.

At night they assemble in the palace of Valhalla, where they feast on the most delicious viands, dressed and served up by maidens adorned with celestial charms, and flushed with the bloom of everlasting youth. They solace themselves with drinking nectar out of the skulls of their enemies, whom they had killed in their days of nature. Although Odin was their God, yet he was not destined to live always; but should die and the whole world would perish with him. It was for fear that he would be killed by the evil one, or some of his angels, that these old heroes were said to assemble around him. Besides these

precautions, when he went out of his palace he was guarded by a knight on each side, who rode a swift horse, and carried a two-edged sword, and a spear that never missed its aim. It was the constant care of Odin and his martial companions to protect the world from inward commotions, and any disaster that might befall it, as all were doomed to perish together.

"But," the legend adds, "neither Odin himself, nor all his warriors, will be able to save him and the world from final destruction." We think that this last passage explains the tale as giving a beautiful description and personification of *time*. The Bible of the Goths was called the *Voluspa*. While only about three hundred lines in length, it declares that it reveals the works of the Father of Nature. This mysterious book begins with a description of the chaos, and then proceeds to the formation of the world, and the creation of the different species of its inhabitants—giants, men, and dwarfs. It then explains the employment of the fairies, whom the Northern people call *nornies*, and concludes with a long and striking account of the final state of the universe and its dissolution by a general conflagration. In this catastrophe, Odin, and all the rabble of the pagan divinities are to be confounded in the general ruin, no more to appear on the stage of the universe;

and, out of the ruins of the former world, according to the *Voluspa*, a new one shall spring up, arrayed in all the bloom of celestial beauty. There is a remarkable correspondence in the order, and even in the statement of the facts contained in this strange book, when compared with the accounts in our own Bible. The chaos, the creation, and the final destruction of the world by fire are strangely similar. It was generally believed by the Goths that, if they should succeed in reaching Asgard, they would be permitted to reign with Odin, so long as the world stood. This may have been one of the reasons for their migration. If so, no people were ever truer to their beliefs and convictions than they; for they carried their irresistible arms across the continent into Italy, and Gaul, and Spain; and parties of Goths, conducted by a heroic leader, vainly sought their celestial city up the Nile, that river of fables. This great nation, notwithstanding the beautiful myth of their heroic religion, accepted the much more touching story of Christianity with more readiness than did the enlightened Greek or Roman. The Gothic bishop, Ulphilas, who lived about the middle of the fourth century, probably did more than any other prelate to convert his people.

His success was very marked, for he succeeded

in bringing over the majority of the Goths to the Christian faith. Ulphilas invented a Gothic alphabet, and, having accomplished that, translated portions of the Bible into their language. The books of the Old Testament, containing the history of the Jewish wars, he did not translate, as he feared to foster and encourage their warlike spirit by these sacred annals. The similarity between the Gothic language and some of the German dialects is quite marked; and, for the gratification of your curiosity, we here quote the Lord's Prayer, from the Bible of Ulphilas, and give a literal translation of the words in their regular order:

Atta unsar thu in himinam, weihnai namo thein. Quimai thiudi.
Father our thou in heaven, hallowed name thine. Come king-
 nassus theins. Wairthai wilja theins, swe in himina jah ana airthai.
dom thine. Be done will thine, as in heaven as on earth.
 Hlaif unsarana thana sin-teinan give uns himmadaga.
Bread our the perpetual, or daily, give us to-day.
 Jah aflet uns thatei skulans sijaima, swaswe jah weis afle-
And forgive us what guilty we are, as also we for-
 tam thaim skulam unsaraim. Jah ni briggais uns in fraistu-
give the trespassers ours. And not bring us into tempta-
 bujai, ak lausei uns af thamma ubilin, unte theina ist thiudan-
tion, but deliver us of the evil, for thine is king-
 gardi jah maths jah wultus in aiwins. Amen.
dom and might and glory for ever. Amen.

The royal line of kings, who ruled this devoted people, were termed the Amali. They claimed to have sprung from Odin, and, in fact, were consid-

ered half divine by their faithful subjects. It is said that they were a race of giants of extraordinary stature. Their gigantic frame and powerful arm naturally made them the leaders in battle. When an Amal died, his successor was elevated on a shield, and borne on the shoulders of his people, as a token of their fealty. No people were ever truer to their sovereign than were the Goths. His word was supreme law, and no one for a moment questioned the justice of his decisions. Their Amal was almost the object, not only of their love, but their devotion; and to this fact they owed their invincible power as much as to their personal prowess. Their natural honor raised them far above the level of barbarians. Their minds seemed to be as superior as their bodies, and literature soon became the delight of those of them who were nearly associated with the Greeks.

But all the civilization to which they were brought, and all the culture they acquired, never smothered the martial spirit that slumbered in their bosom, which needed only to be fed by the hot blood that ran in their veins. Strong in body, broad in mind, and large of soul, this race was well calculated to make the great and lasting changes in the history of nations that it accomplished. The Goths made not only good warriors,

but good Christians ; and, having formed such an agreeable acquaintance with the Christian Goths, we will be much better prepared to admire their bold and renowned chieftain, Alaric, who sacked the city of Rome.

NOTE.—On the subject of this chapter, see Pinkerton's Goths, Gibbon's Rome, The Encyclopedia Britannica, and Vollmer's Vollständiges Wörterbuch der Mythologie aller Nationen.





CHAPTER XVII.

ALARIC AND THE RISING OF THE GOTHs.

IN the month of January, 395 (A. D.), the great Theodosius, who, by his unusual abilities, had supported the moldering edifice of the Empire, died. Arcadius and Honorius, the two sons of the deceased Emperor, received the vast domain of their father together. Arcadius reigned in the East at Constantinople, and Honorius in the West at Rome. It would be difficult to say which was the weaker and more imbecile of the two—probably Arcadius. As it is, we have most to do with Honorius, and, by the time we have become familiar with his inability to rule, we will be fully able to judge of Arcadius. Honorius possessed neither passions nor talents. In his youth he made but little progress in exercises of riding or drawing the bow. Too indolent to follow these manly sports, he retired to the luxury of the palace, and, as monarch of the West, he found opportunity for the exercise

of his puerile and childish propensities in feeding poultry, which became his daily employment and delight. His predecessors had, by their presence in the camp and the most distant provinces, inspired the devoted soldiery to deeds of valor, and won the love of loyal subjects. But the young Emperor shut himself up, almost a prisoner, in his palace, and was almost as unknown to his subjects as were some of the equally worthless courtiers who shared his luxury.

Far different was the character of his able general, Stilicho, into whose firm and skillful hands he had resigned the reins of government. Stilicho traced his ancestry back to the bold and perfidious race of Vandals. His father was an officer in the barbarian cavalry in the service of Valens. "In his youth, he embraced the profession of arms. His prudence and valor were soon distinguished in the field, and the horsemen and archers of the East admired his superior dexterity." He has been described by a historian as surpassing the measure of the demi-gods of antiquity in his strength and stature. While a private citizen, whenever he walked through the streets of the capital the astonished crowd made room for the stranger, whose mien and bearing was that of a hero.

The sagacious and intrepid Stilicho rose from

master of the horse to count of the domestics, and from that to the supreme rank of master-general of the armies of the Western Empire.

His physical strength was indicative also of his strength of character. He was none less than a noble and virtuous Christian. We are informed that, on his voyage to Africa, with a fleet and army for the chastisement of the rebellious Gildo, he spent his days and nights in fasting and prayer, and singing psalms. Confident of success, and trusting in God, his faith was rewarded by a speedy victory, and Africa was again restored in peace to the numerous possessions of the unworthy Emperor.

It was very fortunate that in this time of absolute need the Roman world found so able a defender. Arcadius, who might have enjoyed the profitable and able statesmanship of Stilicho, as well as his brother, refused it, and was induced, through the advice of his envious and scheming favorites, to go so far as to declare his would-be friend a public enemy. With this glimpse at the condition of government, we return to our friends the Goths.

On a cold, wintery morning, soon after the death of the great Theodosius, the war-trumpet of the Goths sounded far and near across the plains of Thrace. Every chieftain of every clan seized his horn, and blew a long, loud blast that was soon

after re-echoed by his neighbor. At the sound of war the peasant left his farm, the woodman his ax, the shepherd his flocks, and all gladly seized the arms they had recently been compelled to lay down. Loudly and fiercely the war-cry rang from the woody shores of Dalmatia—over the mountains and across the plains, until it aroused the cowardly Arcadius in his palace at Constantinople.

The hour had come when this people, who had been repeatedly wronged, should be avenged; and upon whom else should it be but upon him who had last wronged them? By their last treaty with the Empire they were assured a certain subsidy, as a support, as well as a reward to their troops, for acting as auxiliaries. Arcadius, who lacked the prudence, as well as the brains of his father, had, either through his own neglect, or by the treachery of his minister, allowed the discontinuance or diminution of these supplies.

The auxiliaries immediately erected the Gothic standard; and under it all the troops who gloried in the Gothic name rallied. They did not enter the conflict alone, but gathered to their ranks the Northern nations across the Danube. The savage warriors of Dacia issued from their interminable forests, and crossed over into Thrace. So severe was the Winter that the poet has remarked,

“that they rolled their ponderous wagons over the icy back of the indignant river.” The revolt of the Goths was this time to a purpose. The wrongs they had endured from time to time had become unbearable. The calm determination with which their bold and able leader directed their movements and wielded their undisciplined hordes, displayed remarkable generalship—such as had never before been exhibited by any of their passionate chiefs.

Alaric, whom we well might surname the Bold, was the military genius of his age. History mentions only one comparable with him while Rome flourished—that was Hannibal. Alaric “was descended from the noble race of the *Balti*, which yielded only to the royal dignity of the *Amali*.” The illustrious race of the *Balti*, or *Bold*, long continued to flourish in France.

Our Gothic hero possessed traits of character far superior to those of the majority of his people. He was accomplished and courteous, as well as bold and daring. His virtue, his generosity, and especially his moderation when successful, was surprising. Besides all else that we can say of him, he was a devoted Christian.

In the presence of such a leader, and such an army as he commanded, no wonder that the Roman world trembled. Constantinople might have

fallen into his hands; but the judicious General preferred to lead his army into the rich fields of Greece, where he could satisfy the desires of the people for wealth, and his own ambition for fame. Turning their standards southward, the Gothic army traversed unresisted the plains of Macedonia and Thessaly, passed Thermopylæ, that monument of Spartan valor, and then flooded, with their almost innumerable hosts, the land of the muses, of poetry, of philosophy, of art, and of beauty. Smoldering villages and a devastated country marked the wake of the rude army. Thebes, the city with her seven gates, was passed by Alaric in his haste to reach Athens. No resistance whatever was offered on the entire route from Thermopylæ to the city of wisdom; and, having arrived before its gates, the prudent hero offered to accept as a ransom the greater part of the Athenian wealth. Terrified by the voice of the Gothic herald, the people submitted to the requisitions asked of them; and the treaty of peace was consummated with the strictest oaths from both parties. Alaric, with a small guard, was permitted to enter the city of *Minerva*. He there indulged himself in the refreshment of the bath, and enjoyed a splendid banquet, provided for him and his company by the magistrates of the much-afflicted city.

It is to be remembered that this barbarian, who had become a Christian at heart, had not, or could not, at least immediately, overcome the warlike, and even cruel propensities, so peculiar to his birth and ancestry.

The baleful presence of the conqueror blasted the whole of Attica ; and an old legend, one of those many relics of a declining paganism, declares that Athens itself would have been sacked, had not Minerva, the patron goddess of the city, appeared upon the walls, clad in armor, grasping a flashing sword in her hand and bearing a shield, which, as the story goes, inspired terror and dismay, and, by its movements, darkness, clouds, thunder and lightning, were collected. They go so far as to affirm that the angry phantom of their old hero, Achilles, defiantly threatened the barbarian hosts. Ridiculous as this story may appear, it is no more absurd than many of the fabulous traditions that then existed, and still exist in the Romish Church, concerning the miracles of saints. You may rest assured that the mind of Alaric was too cool, and of too much of a practical turn, to have imagined, much less seen, any such fanciful vision.

Corinth, Argos, and even Sparta, yielded without resistance to the Gothic arms. "The descendants of that extraordinary people," says

Gibbon, "who had considered valor and discipline as the walls of Sparta, no longer remembered the generous reply of their ancestors to an invader* more formidable than Alaric: 'If thou art a God, thou wilt not hurt those who have never injured thee—if thou art a man, advance—thou wilt find men equal to thyself.'" The monuments of art, and the work and skill of ages, fell into the ruthless hands of the barbarians, who valued them more for their costly adornments than for the elegance of the workmanship.

"The invasion of the Goths, instead of vindicating the honor, contributed, at least accidentally, to the extirpation of the last remains of paganism. And the mysteries of Ceres, which had subsisted eighteen hundred years, did not survive the destruction of Eleusis and the calamities of Greece." Ceres was the name given to the pagan goddess of harvest—in fact she was "*mother earth*"—and her mysterious worship was probably continued later than that of any of the other pagan deities.

Afflicted and bleeding Greece, unable to defend her fading glory, at last had to seek the assistance of the powerful Stilicho, who hastily collected a navy, and sailed to the shores of Corinth. Thence he marched to Arcadia, the country of

* Pyrrhus, 272 B. C.

woodlands and mountains, where, by the exercise of untiring skill and energy, the Roman at length prevailed against the Goth, whom he drove into Elis, a country which had hitherto been the home of peace, and whose inhabitants delighted only in their rural seclusion. Here many of the Goths deserted, and delivered up their arms to the Eleans, as they marched through their country. Fortune itself, for a time, seemed to forsake the Gothic chieftain. His camp was besieged, and, to his horror, the very river that supplied his army with water was turned from its channel by his sagacious enemy. Parched with thirst, and surrounded on all sides, both by the walls of the Romans and the strong line of guards they had thrown out, Alaric seemed doomed to become a captive. So long as Stilicho commanded, and trusted in God, he kept the invaders under control; but, too confident of victory, he in person retired, with a few of his favorites, to enjoy a triumph. Somewhat elated, perhaps, by what appeared to be a certain success, he carelessly departed from the path of rectitude, and indulged himself in the attendance upon that bane of virtue in all stages of society, the theater. "Alaric appears to have seized the favorable moment to execute one of those hardy enterprises, in which the abilities of a general are displayed with more

genuine luster than in the tumult of a day of battle." The first difficulty to be overcome was the passage of the walls and intrenchments of the enemy. However, the soldiers of Stilicho had become, to a great degree, demoralized. Many had deserted their standards, and had banded themselves into gangs of robbers, who stripped the already desolate country of all the merciless barbarians had left behind. The Gothic chieftain embraced the opportunity that thus presented itself, and, exercising the greatest prudence, as well as rapidity and secrecy of action, he led his trusty troops, with his captives and spoils, out of their temporary prison, and, by a forced march of thirty miles, through innumerable dangers, passing an arm of the sea in his route, he took possession of the province of Epirus. It was not until the wary Goths were far on their march that Stilicho was informed that Alaric and his own glory had departed together.

While the Romans were sluggishly recovering themselves from the dream of pleasure and victory in which they had been indulging themselves, Alaric consummated a treaty of peace with Arcadius and the Court at Constantinople. Stilicho wisely withdrew his troops rather than involve the two empires in a civil war. The Gothic

General, by this happy measure, became no longer the outlaw, but the subject of a power he had at first intended to destroy.*

* See Gibbon on the Revolt of the Goths.





CHAPTER XVIII.

CROWNING OF ALARIC.



GENERAL dissatisfaction, both of people and officials, prevailed all over the Eastern Empire, concerning the cowardly action of Arcadius. The people were ready to take the life of their notorious sovereign, who only feared that the almost impregnable fortress of Constantinople would next be assaulted, and his own effeminate dignity be obliged to appear in person upon the field. Arcadius thought, as did his brother soon afterward, when Alaric appeared in sight of his palace, that to save the Empire was to save himself.

Not satisfied with the personal security he had purchased by this treaty with the Goths, Arcadius exhibited the consummateness of his weakness by appointing Alaric to the Master-Generalship of Eastern Illyricum. The indignation of the people of Greece, whose homes had been burned and their lands ravished, was of no avail. In vain

did the eloquent philosopher Synesius, of Cyrene, (who was afterward made bishop,) plead on behalf of the people for the Emperor to banish frivolity and luxury from his Court, and himself, in the person of a plain soldier, take the field, and drive the barbarian hosts from his provinces. Synesius pleaded with him "to force, in such a moment of public danger, the mechanic from his shop, and the philosopher from his school; to rouse the indolent citizen from his dream of pleasure, and to arm for the protection of agriculture the hands of the laborious husbandman." But neither the oration which the philosopher delivered, nor the crown of gold which he presented to the Emperor, moved him. He only persisted in raising Alaric to the first rank in his Empire. The Goth now had what he desired. He had virtually become possessor of a kingdom without fighting for it. He began immediately to exercise his new gift of statesmanship, as well as generalship. The four great arsenals of the East were immediately commanded to furnish the Gothic hosts with the necessary supply of complete armor. Alaric himself was conscious of the great height to which he had attained; and applauded himself, not upon the personal dignity he had reached, but upon the hope that he yet might establish a free kingdom for his people, who had

so long sought a home in that unfriendly land. And although he forced the Romans to forge the weapons of their own destruction, it was the result of a heart full of love for the welfare and happiness of his brethren in arms.

This fraternal spirit well deserved the reward that Alaric soon received at the hands of the Goths. The glory of his deeds, as well as the glory of his birth, together with the faith they placed in his future designs, induced the grateful barbarians to raise their hero to the same dignity as that possessed by an Amal. In their camp in Thessalonica, the patriotic cry of "Alaric, King of the Goths!" rang from clan to clan, and quarter to quarter, until the whole army, unbidden, assembled around the chieftain's headquarters. Elated at the hope of the restoration of sovereignty to their nation, they led Alaric from his simple soldier's tent, placed him in their midst, and, throwing down a ponderous shield, placed the giant on it, and raised him on their devoted shoulders, amid the deafening cry, "Alaric, the King of the Goths!" "Long live Alaric the Bold!" "Alaric, the Son of Odin!" "The Chief from the River!" (so called because he was born on the Island of Peuce, at the mouth of the Danube.) Those powerful limbs and broad shoulders, incased in blazing armor, were those

of a warrior indeed. Well might his people admire him—greaves, cuirass, buckler, a ponderous sword, and a massive helmet, from whose crest a rich black ostrich plume hung gracefully down, constituted his armor. Over his coat of mail was carelessly thrown a bear-skin cloak, ornamented with the claws of the beast itself. This was the vestige of a more peaceful life. The tumult having subsided, a chieftain stepped forward, accompanied by the most illustrious heroes of the tribes, and, after their custom, solemnly proclaimed Alaric King of the West Goths. The new-made king at once unclasped his helmet, and, baring a noble forehead, and exposing his long yellow locks to the north wind, said: "Tribes of the North—children of Odin, time and fortune will tell whether I deserved this honor at your hands. You have made me king. I now promise you, by the God of the Christians, to find either a kingdom or a grave in Italy. Instead of seeking Asgard we will force our way through the passes of the Alps, and penetrate to Rome itself. Will you follow me?"

The address had its effect. The homeless Goths began to entertain fair hopes of rich possessions, green pastures, and a land of peace. From this moment the royal dignity was conferred forever upon the race of the Balti, which

now ranked second only to the illustrious family of the Amali. In this way Alaric was armed with a double power—first that received from Arcadius, and, secondly, that received at the hands of his own army.

At once the great army broke up its camp. The rattle of armor, the shouts of the exultant soldiery, and the rumble of heavy wagons, soon surprised the Thessalonicians, whose country they were about to abandon. Having arrived in hostile Pannonia, they were met by numerous obstacles. The warlike inhabitants of that country assailed them at every pass, in every forest and ravine, where concealment could be found for their cowardly bands.

Before they had proceeded far within the confines of this inhospitable land, the army arrived at a mountain pass strongly fortified by nature, but more strongly guarded by a hostile army. This very formidable opposition took the Goths rather by surprise. A flight of darts from the bows of the light-armed archers, posted in secure hiding-places in the lofty cliffs, felled many an unwary hero to the ground. So unexpected was the surprise, and so fatal the effect of the discharge of arrows, that the army for a moment reeled, and all was thrown into confusion. But the voice of Alaric rang clear and loud above the

tumult, bidding every man to stand in his rank. In an instant the broad shields of the Goths formed a safe covering for most of their persons, and every man prepared himself for an attack. The light-armed, with drawn swords in their hands, regardless of the showers of arrows, clambered up the rocks, and drove from their hiding-places those who escaped their swords. At the same time the heavy-armed spearsmen, headed by their king, met face to face the stern lancers who held the pass. The fight was a fierce one ; for, when the two foes closed in upon each other, they fought man to man, hand to hand, until finally the Goths prevailed, and the phalanx of the rude, but hardy Pannonians, was broken. But few of the enemy escaped from the Gothic cavalry—to which, for the grandeur and fleetness of its horses, the world has never since produced an equal.

The army in its march, although harassed considerably by archers in ambush, passed on, forcing its way to the foot of the Julian Alps. Here a critical state of affairs presented itself. The pass, which was almost another Thermopylæ, was strongly guarded by the well-disciplined Roman legions. To storm it, while guarded by such a force, would be to lose half his army. The sallies of the respective clans from time to time

more strongly convinced Alaric of the truth of this conclusion. He had no doubt that he could take this fortress of nature, but, in so doing, he would sacrifice the flower of that army for which he was seeking a kingdom. Furthermore, if he should even accomplish this, and make this sacrifice, he would not have troops sufficient to take Rome.

In view of these considerations the wary general speedily broke up his camp, called in his outposts, and retreated, with all possible haste, back over the track he had just made. Having passed through Pannonia, to the banks of the Danube, he there replenished his ranks with fresh swarms of barbarians, who crossed from Dacia to espouse the Gothic cause. The Ostrogoths gladly flocked to the standard of their brethren in arms from the West.

After spending the Winter in camp, the King again took up his march westward, with an army of about two hundred thousand men. The terror-stricken Pannonians, whose knowledge of the world and geography in general was not very extended, were inclined to believe that this host of warriors had arisen out of the Eastern ocean, or had descended from the abode of the gods—they being as well informed concerning one as the other. No resistance was offered until, after long

and weary marches, they arrived in sight of the snow-clad peaks of the Alps.

Here, the posts of the enemy had been extended over a considerable section of country. Bands of sentinels had been stationed in every prominent and important place, while, in fact, the main army of the Romans had retired into Italy. Their general, who had little suspected the plans of the Goths, supposed that they had been overawed at the appearance of the Roman arms, and had retired. The outposts were only sent out in order to produce the same effect as before, namely, that of discouraging the Goths from their project of passing the Alps. This sham appearance of strength was fearlessly put to the test by Alaric, who steadily marched his hosts to and through the pass, as regardless of the scattering darts of the skirmishers as he would have been of hail-stones. The poet tells us that "Fame, encircling with terror her gloomy wings, proclaimed the march of the barbarian army, and filled Italy with consternation." The Roman army was speedily collected from camp and garrison, and every possible means taken to check the Gothic invader. But Alaric, with extraordinary sagacity, avoided an engagement by means of counter-marches and retreats, and then advances, in directions unthought of by the enemy.

After numerous maneuvers of this kind, he succeeded in surprising the enemy near Aquileia, and driving them within the gates. Having done this, he quietly settled down, not so much for a siege as for the purpose of starving out the city. The neighboring country supplied the army from its rich store-houses, and Alaric was content to allow his people to live off the fat of the land, while he could, at the same time, reduce the enemy without bloodshed. The siege was a tedious one; but at last the beleaguered city, in which many were at the point of perishing from hunger, forced its general to capitulate.

Many a rich prize, both of officers and treasure, fell into the hands of Alaric. But, as moderation was a prominent characteristic of his nature, he liberated the greater number of the common soldiery, only retaining certain captives for slaves. The army captured was, comparatively speaking, quite small, and Alaric was not a little disappointed in his prize.

The conquests of Venetia and Istria, two provinces at the head of the Adriatic Sea, were conducted very slowly indeed; yet the Gothic arms gained victory after victory over the legions sent against them, until all Italy was filled with terror at the approaching fate of the Empire.

The barbarian cavalry swept all of the Northern

provinces, until the Gothic camp became a great store-house of wealth.

The alarm was universal, and, instead of exhibiting the courage and patriotism of their ancestry, the cowardly citizens took advantage of every possible opportunity to embark with their valuable effects for Sicily or the African coast. The coast country, the ports, and the shipping were all filled with fugitives, who loved their fortunes and their lives better than the grand historic land that had given them birth.

The fate of Rome was to all appearances sealed. Signs and prodigies, which a credulous and superstitious people could easily magnify and believe, were reported to have been seen by both pagans and Christians. Mr. Gibbon says: "The public distress was aggravated by the fears and reproaches of superstition. Every house produced some horrid tale of strange and portentous accidents; the pagans deplored the neglect of omens and the interruption of sacrifices; but the Christians still derived some comfort from the powerful intercession of saints and martyrs."

For your amusement, I will quote an account of these phenomena and wonders, as given by Philostorgius,* an ecclesiastical historian of the fourth and early part of the fifth centuries.

* See translation in Bohn's Eccl. Library.

“There was, at this time, such a pestilence as had never occurred before within the memory of man, in accordance with the portent of the stars, which appeared in the form of a sword; for, not only was the military force destroyed as in former wars, nor was it only in one part of the world that signal calamities occurred, but men of every rank and degree perished, and the whole of Europe, and a very large part of Asia, was entirely ravaged. A considerable portion of Africa also, and especially that part which was subject to the Romans, felt the blow. For the swords of the barbarians carried off large multitudes, and pestilence and famine pressed upon them at the same time, together with large herds of wild beasts. In addition to this there were very grievous earthquakes, which overturned houses and entire cities from their foundations, and hurled them into inevitable ruin. Moreover, in certain parts the earth opened and gasped, swallowing up the inhabitants suddenly as in a tomb. There were also, in certain other parts, fierce droughts and fiery whirlwinds, descending from above, to complete the manifold calamity till it was past endurance. Hail, too, fell in many places bigger than a stone which would fill the hand—nay, it was found in some parts of such a size that it weighed no less than eight pounds. Moreover, there was

a great downfall of snow, accompanied by a severe frost, which seized upon those who had not been carried off by other calamities, and deprived them of life, most clearly revealing the anger of God. But to mention the details of these visitations is a task which surpasses human ability."

This terribly expanded account of wonderful things is evidently the work of a credulous and even superstitious mind, although the writer was a Christian. How true the above statements may be is unknown; at best, they are much exaggerated, and give a fair example of the over-credulous tendency of the age, from which the Fathers themselves, in their histories, are not altogether free.





CHAPTER XIX.

FLIGHT OF HONORIUS.

HONORIUS was probably the most notorious coward that ever wore the purple; "he was distinguished above his subjects by the pre-eminence of fear as well as of rank."

His vanity never led him to suspect that any power existed on the face of the earth presumptuous enough to disturb the peace of the Romans. It is true, the mention of the Roman arms carried terror even yet over all civilized Europe, and parts of Asia and Africa. But the Goths, too, had a martial prestige, as much unknown to the Romans as was the fame of the great deeds and admirable prowess of the old heroes unknown to them. The pride and luxury in which the Emperor had been educated had not a little to do with his cowardly nature.

The flatterers who frequented his Court indulged his timidity until Alaric was within a few miles of

the palace of Milan. At the announcement of this very imminent danger, Honorius very gladly accepted the proposition of favorites (who, by the way, are the curse of every court) to allow them to convey his sacred person to some secure and retired station in distant Gaul. Happy it was for the honor of Rome that among the many who frequented that luxurious Court there was one who not only had the courage to say no to such a disgraceful measure, but had the authority, too, with which to suppress it.

Stilicho now attained to the summit of his own grandeur; for, like the delivering angel of a falling empire, he alone stretched forth a hand to save in this hour of extremity.

Alaric, probably, would not have been allowed to advance so far in his march had not the armies, and particularly the troops of the palace, been recently sent to the Rhætian frontier, to drive out a body of barbarians who were ravaging that province. The brave general, fearing lest a moment should be lost, and that new levies for soldiers might be delayed too long, immediately vaulted into his saddle, and, accompanied by a few daring followers, bade farewell to the Emperor and his Court, with the request that they should hold out, at least until his return, when he would bring troops to their rescue, and the rescue of the

Roman honor. The hero and his little band hastily embarked on the Larian (Como) lake, and arrived at the foot of the Alps. Here their courage and hardihood did not fail them ; but, in the midst of that Alpine Winter, they ascended the mountains of ice, and, to the great surprise and joy of the legions, arrived in the Roman camp.

The unexpected appearance of Stilicho so alarmed the hostile Alamani that they at once sued for peace, and, as a condition, they volunteered to send a select number of their bravest youth to oppose the invaders.

The cohorts that had been engaged in Rhætia speedily repaired to the imperial standard ; yet, they alone were not deemed sufficient for the purpose by that general whose foresight was never surpassed, and who deserved a worthier sovereign and a braver people. He immediately issued orders to the troops stationed in the far West, and even sent a courier to the legion guarding the wall of Britain against the warlike Caledonians of the North. The soldiers of Germany and of Gaul all flocked to the rescue of Italy. The noted cavalry of the Alani was persuaded to espouse the cause of Honorius. Mr. Gibbon says : “ When Stilicho seemed to abandon his sovereign in the unguarded palace of Milan, he had probably calculated the term of his absence, the dis-

tance of the enemy, and the obstacles that might retard their march. He principally depended upon the rivers of Italy—the Adige, the Mincius, the Oglio, and the Addua—which, in the Winter or Spring, by the fall of rains or by the melting of snows, are commonly swelled into impetuous torrents. But the season happened to be remarkably dry, and the Goths could traverse, without impediment, the wide and stony beds, whose center was faintly marked by the course of a shallow stream.”

Alaric had exercised his generalship to a considerable extent in the selection of his camp, and in the posting of detachments. A strong body of Goths were already in possession of the bridge and passage of the Addua. A cold, clear morning was chosen for the attack upon the royal city. Alaric, mounted on a stately Scythian war-horse, headed his army. At the blast of the trumpet, the foot-soldiers, with spears and huge bucklers, crossed the bridge, while the cavalry, the pride of the Goths, forded the river. The sentinels guarding the palace immediately gave the alarm. A cry of terror arose all over the ungarrisoned city. Stilicho, with his legions, had not yet arrived. The scene in the palace was one of the utmost confusion. The cowardly Emperor was completely overcome with fear, and the only refuge

was to risk his life to the speed of his best charger. Not a moment was lost, for, before Alaric had entered the suburbs of the city, the royal train of Honorius, and a few of his feeble flatterers and statesmen, dashed out of the palace court, rolling up a cloud of dust behind them as they vanished over the plains between them and the Alps. Alaric, half pleased at seeing the Emperor of the West fly before him, and half disappointed at losing so valuable a prize, shouted, with wild enthusiasm: "On! on! to the chase, right on, horse of the Goths; half the royal treasure shall be your reward for Honorius." A terrible shout arose, alike from footmen and horsemen, and the noble steeds, catching the meaning, dashed on with wonderful speed, amid the clatter of armor and the shouts of their riders.

The bright sun flashed alternately from lance and from mail coat, until a great cloud of dust rolled up from behind them like the smoke from a prairie on fire. Honorius and his train had scarcely crossed the Po before he discovered the Goths close on his heels.

The imminence of the danger compelled him at once to seek a temporary shelter within the fortifications of Asta, a town of Liguria, situate on the banks of the Tanarus. Leaving a considerable guard at the bridge and ford of Addua, Alaric

pressed down with his army upon Asta, consoling himself with the assurance that the rich prize of royal captives awaited him. The Goths settled down for a siege; every advantageous place was taken possession of, and, from all appearances, an almost immediate surrender was certain. The Gothic King had even sent terms of capitulation, to which he only awaited an answer.

In the mean time, Stilicho gathered his legions on the Rhætian frontier, and, by forced marches, reached the ford of Addua. This he found strongly guarded, and, feeling the need of his presence at Asta, he chose from the ranks of his cavalry a select band of Romans, all brave as their leader. Leaving the army to drive the enemy from the bridge, he and his intrepid van-guard swam the Addua, dashed across the plains to the Po, which they forded with little hazard, and, at night-fall, camped in sight of the Gothic camp. Soon after dark, Stilicho, with his heroic band, rode right through the Gothic lines straight into their camp, and, sword in hand, hewed their way through the almost impenetrable opposition that met them. In spite of all the attempts of the Goths to hew them down or drive them back, the brave leader and followers reached the gate of the city without the loss of a man, although nearly all were covered with wounds. Fortunately, Stilicho

remained unscathed ; his gigantic form, of which we have spoken before, was able to bear a heavier armor than that usually worn by ordinary men.

Having arrived at the gate, the keeper demanded the countersign ; but the well-known and welcome voice of the general proved a happy and timely substitute, for the whole Gothic army, that had been suddenly aroused, was pressing them hard in the rear ; and barely had the massy doors of the fortress closed, when the crash of armor and the clang of steel told that a host of barbarians were pressing their mailed shoulders hard against it. One moment more and the fate of Honorius, Stilicho, and Rome, would have been sealed forever. Covered with dust, bespattered with blood, and his sword dripping with the red gore of many an unfortunate barbarian, the great general walked into Court, to the irrepressible joy of the Emperor, who had already despaired of any means of escape. The little garrison, who had expected to be sold into slavery, or meet their fate at the hands of their cruel enemies, raised a shout of joy on the walls that soon told the Goths of the handsome prize they had lost. Alaric became still more impatient, and would have vented his impatience in an attack on the following morning, had he not, to his surprise, discovered that during the night the great Ro-

man army had camped all around him. The engagement at the bridge of the Addua lasted but a short time—the Goths, being overpowered by numbers, found it necessary to retreat into camp with all possible speed.

Instead of witnessing the capture of the rich prize, with a whole Court, that was imprisoned within the walls of Asta, Alaric daily witnessed the arrival of the legions of the West, who came from the most distant parts of the Continent, and successively issued through the snow-bound passes of the Alps. His foraging parties were soon intercepted; and at last the legion from Britain, bearing its eagle from the severities of Northern Caledonia, had come to the rescue of Rome and Italy, their mother, whose climate welcomed them with its congenial breezes, as a mother with outstretched arms receives her sons back from their wanderings. “The vigilance of the Romans prepared to form a chain of fortifications, and to besiege the line of the besiegers.” The Goths had to rely wholly upon the store of provisions in camp. A battle was certain soon; and Alaric would have fought both the Emperor’s garrison in the front and the innumerable hosts of the Romans in the rear, had not his chieftains thought it best not to hazard so great an undertaking. “A military council was assembled of

the long-haired chiefs of the Gothic nation—of aged warriors, whose bodies were wrapped in furs, and whose stern countenances were marked with honorable wounds. They weighed the glory of persisting in their attempt against the advantage of securing their plunder, and they recommended the prudent measure of a seasonable retreat. In this important debate Alaric displayed the spirit of the conqueror of Rome.” He reminded them of the heroism of their ancestors, of their marvelous deeds of daring, of the migration of their people from the far, far North—how all this had been done in search of a kingdom where they might find wealth that would reward them for their valor. He repeated to them the success of their own exploits in Greece, and reminded them that now Italy, with its treasure, its beauty, and its fame, lay before them—that soon, if success crowned their arms, they might plant the Gothic standard on the walls of Rome, and enrich their army with the accumulated spoils of three hundred triumphs. His eloquent speech was closed by the repetition of his vow, made at his coronation, that he would find in Italy either a kingdom or a grave.

NOTE.—The uncredited quotations in this chapter are from Gibbon.



CHAPTER XX.

BATTLE OF POLLENTIA.

THE enthusiastic and fiery speech of Alaric had but little effect in changing the minds of the old warriors. They would not for a moment entertain the thought of hazarding the success of their whole campaign in a battle, while in their present situation. So, to make the best of it, they quietly withdrew the same night from before the walls of Asta to Pollentia, where they pitched their camp and built fortifications.

It was on the 29th of March, A. D. 403, that Easter, with all its holy remembrances, dawned upon the Gothic camp. With the breaking of the day, the hosts of warriors rose to celebrate, with all the ancient ceremonies, the anniversary of the victory won by the Captain of their salvation. An altar had been raised in the center of the camp, about which all assembled. The holy father, holding a cross in his hand, pathetically

pointed those rude barbarians to it and to Him who died upon it for them; told them of the love of the Savior, and encouraged them by bidding them to be of good cheer, for, if they were soldiers of the Cross, they should overcome all things. The touching sermon had ended—the army had fallen upon their knees—the father before the altar cried in prayer to the great God of battles, to take into his keeping that chieftain and his noble followers, to crown their arms with victory, and to adopt them as his people.

In the midst of these solemnities the Christian Goths were startled by the loud ring of the Roman bugle at their rear, then the clatter of hoofs and rattle of armor. The whole camp was at once thrown into confusion. Every man rushed for his sword or his lance. But, amid all the dismay and terror, one was fearless and calm. Rising from his knees, Alaric the Bold ascended the sacred steps of the altar, and, waving his ponderous blade, where the father had a few moments before held up the cross, he cried: "Heroes of the Goths, sons of the North, fear not; trust in the God of the Christians; he will deliver us. Now, in his name, to arms!" At the next instant the Imperial cavalry, headed by Saul, a barbarian and pagan, charged impetuously into the camp. All for a moment was in the most alarm-



ALARIC DEFENDING HIS WIFE AND CHILD.

ing confusion. But a little band of the old heroes, who had seized their arms, formed a phalanx, and, with their long lances, kept the Roman horse at bay long enough for Alaric to exercise his undaunted genius in giving his army an order and a field of battle. The long lines of the Goths presented a formidable appearance, indeed; in front the spearsmen, with lances in position to receive the enemy. On either wing, and in the center, as well as in the rear, were stationed the cavalry, the like of which has never since been known among the nations. In the rear of all, occupying a slight elevation, were the archers, whose bows were nearly twice the size of those used by the Romans. The brave band of spearsmen, who opposed the charge of the squadrons, could hold their position no longer. The innumerable hosts of the Romans pressed them down, and they each found a grave at his post. Once more the ancient valor seemed to return to the legions, and Saul's cavalry swept down upon the Goths, like one of those terrible storms in the Arabian and Saharan deserts, when whole caravans are buried by the sands. As they advanced, the Gothic archers shot a cloud of arrows into the air that descended true to their aim, right into the front of the enemy's ranks. They glanced from the shields of the Romans like hailstones;

but many a mail-coat was pierced through and through by those unerring shafts. At first the line of the charge was broken, and a shout went up from the Goths as Alaric ordered them forward to the attack. And as they advanced, from one end of their long line to the other rang their Easter war-cry, "In the God of the Christians we conquer."

At this terrible juncture the chief of the Alani, who had espoused the cause of the Romans, led his cavalry, so noted for swiftness and bravery, into the front of the battle. He himself was somewhat diminutive in form, but he possessed a magnanimous soul, and here he determined to establish that loyalty which had so often been suspected. His squadrons pressed hard upon the spears of the Goths, breaking them and the lines of defense they had formed, but all to no avail. The hosts of barbarians, whose blades already dripped with the blood of the Romans, mowed them as wheat before the reapers. Again and again they rallied and charged, but each time their ranks were broken by the giant Alaric. The zealous chief of the Alani drew off and formed his horsemen again for a final charge. To the right and to the left of him were the Roman squadrons. He determined this time to break the ranks of the enemy. Careless of his own per-

son, he rode into the front of the battle, and was met by Alaric, whose broadsword easily cut a passage to him. For a moment both armies stood still; and then came one of those hand-to-hand combats between the two chieftains, which so often in ancient warfare decided the fate of a nation. The chief of the Goths found no mean foe in his opponent. Small though he was, he was skilled in the use of arms. Again and again their lances clashed, and glanced from their shields. More than once their chargers met, until, at last, as though each were disgusted with his own success, or luck, as we may call it, they threw down their spears, and met sword to sword. Here the superior strength of Alaric prevailed. One blow from that trusty broadsword shivered the breastplate of the chief in pieces, like so much glass, and he fell dead from his saddle. With one wild cry the Goths rushed down upon the enemy. "On! on!" roared Alaric; and his black ostrich plume waved high above the rest, like a standard around which his hosts rallied. The Gothic cavalry charged; the archers shot cloud upon cloud of shafts into the Roman ranks, and the bold swordsmen, regardless of useless risk or peril, each for himself mowed a passage. The enemy staggered, reeled, and turned.

Then came the slaughter. The Goths, exult-

ant in victory, followed them as they fled from the field. At every step scores of brave Romans fell from their saddles. The swift Gothic cavalry hewed them down upon every side. The old heroism of their fathers burned in their breasts, and that savage thirst for blood led them to forget mercy. They forgot the faith they had so lately professed. They thought of themselves only as the worthy sons and heroes of Odin, and, instead of the war-cry of, "The God of the Christians!" the savage yells that went up from their disordered ranks sounded more like the yells of wild beasts in the forest than those of men. At their hands the flower of the Roman squadrons perished, and the remnant that escaped fled in the most precipitous manner. For a moment, and that only, the victory was Alaric's.

Stilicho, fearing that the fate of Rome was already sealed, led forth both the Roman and barbarian infantry. As they marched to the attack, he reminded them of the terrible responsibility that rested on them as soldiers of the Republic; for on them depended the peace, the wealth, the happiness, and the honor of their country. He told them of the valor of their ancestors, and urged them now to prove themselves equally brave. Wild with excitement, the great army received these words of patriotism, and they

rushed into the fight eager to sacrifice their lives for the salvation of the nation. The exultant Goths were as greedy for the slaughter as they.

Thus it was that the two armies met—one glorying in its own strength, forgetful of the God to whom they had committed themselves a few hours before; the other fired by patriotism, each man feeling that he bore the Empire on his own shoulders. Stilicho led his legions with a steady pace to the charge, and, with all the severe discipline of the Roman arms, each man marched unflinchingly up to the lance point of his enemy.

Now came a test of the general's skill, as well as the bravery of his soldiers. The loud war-cry of the Goths rang out till the distant battlements of Pollentia threw back the echo; their heavy infantry rushed down upon the Roman legions as the tide rolls in from the ocean. Again and again were their lines broken, as were those of the enemy. The black plume on the crest of Alaric waved always where the fight was hottest. His heart's desire was to reach Stilicho; but the general well knew that too great a responsibility rested upon him for him to risk his person in single combat with the Gothic King. The Gothic archers showered their shafts upon the enemy, often piercing shield, and breastplate, and wearer

through and through. Next came the cavalry, triumphant in victory, their armor all bespattered with the blood of the Romans. They fell like an avalanche on the rear of the enemy; and now again came the terrible slaughter. In the rear, the broadswords of the Goths slew thousands. In the front, the long lances of the infantry repeatedly broke the line of battle, and at last lances were thrown away and the two armies closed in upon each other in a terrible hand-to-hand fight, where each soldier chose his opponent, and then fought until he or his enemy was slain. Here the bodily strength of the Goths was matched by the discipline of the Romans, and rank after rank of the heroes of both armies fell where they fought, and their places were filled from the rear. Thus, as the hours went by, and the heat of the battle grew hotter, the two armies grew speedily less; neither prevailed—it was only a question of numbers. And, as Alaric glanced across the field, on every side the innumerable hosts of the Romans seemed to press them. His cavalry still fought in the rear; but how small was his army beside that of the enemy! His great heart, ever full of love for his people, sank within him at the thought of their fate. So, as the sun went down, he blew the signal of retreat upon his horn. The Goths were compelled to retire in the worst possible disorder.

Their lines had already been broken, and the King, with all his military genius, had not been able to restore them.

In the face of the fearful odds that bore them down, Alaric, and a few of the old heroes, at the risk both of their persons and the future welfare of their nation, alone covered the retreat. The cavalry, that had done its work so well, engaged with greater daring than ever the whole Roman army, in order that the infantry might reach the camp. This being done, the fleetness of their horses secured them a safe and speedy shelter back of their fortifications.

Night closed in upon the field of carnage, but peace came not with it. The victorious Romans assaulted the intrenchments, and took them by storm; and, instead of an honorable battle, a barbarous slaughter followed, unworthy of Stilicho or his *would-be Christian* army. True, if they considered themselves heathens, and fought for mere revenge, they made a full atonement for the calamities which the Goths had inflicted on the subjects of the Empire. "The magnificent spoils of Corinth and Argos enriched the veterans of the West; the captive wife of Alaric, who had impatiently claimed his promise of Roman jewels and patrician handmaids, was reduced to implore the mercy of the insulting foe; and many thou-

sand prisoners, released from the Gothic chains, dispersed through the provinces of Italy the praises of their heroic deliverer"—so says Gibbon; but we prefer to praise Alaric, who was, no doubt, the greater general; for he possessed a will and energy as well as that peculiar temper of mind which raises a man above every adversity, and furnishes him new resources from his misfortunes.

After the remainder of the Gothic infantry had escaped in the darkness, Alaric withdrew from the bloody field with the greater part of his cavalry entire and unbroken. The fate of his wife, and children, and daughters-in-law had not yet reached his ears, and his present resolve was to "break through the unguarded passes of the Apennines; to spread desolation over the fruitful face of Tuscany, and to conquer or die before the gates of Rome." But conspiracy and treason had poisoned and corrupted the pure loyalty of the vanquished army. Some of the chieftains, dissatisfied with the fate of their arms, secretly sought a treaty with Stilicho. A messenger was sent by the Romans to the Gothic King with the offer of a pension from the Empire if he would retreat from Italy. These terms he would have treated with contempt and indignation, in spite of the threats of the chiefs and the expostulations of the

people, had he not been apprised of the fate of his family.

With great sorrow for their condition, and the loss of a kingdom, he ratified the treaty with the general of the West, and recrossed the Po with the remainder of that once flourishing army, and there awaited the restoration of his wife and children, according to the stipulations of the agreement. But the treacherous Romans, when the Goths had retired to that distance where they supposed nothing more was to be feared from the mere fragment of an army that remained, disregarded those stipulations, and retained in chains the wife of the King. So incensed was Alaric at this infidelity of the enemy that he determined again to make a vigorous stand. To this end, he resolved to occupy Verona, the most important city of the Northern provinces. Here he proposed to refill his ranks from the German tribes across the Rhine, whose alliance he was certain of securing. But the traitorous chiefs, who had first compelled him to a treaty, kept up a regular correspondence with the Roman general, and, before Alaric was aware that his well-laid plan had been betrayed, he was suddenly attacked on all sides by the enemy, while he was advancing toward one of the Alpine passes.

It is not our purpose, dear reader, to burden

you with an account of another battle, which was no doubt as terrible as the one we have just described. It suffices that we should only quote the brief account given by Mr. Gibbon :

“In this bloody action, at a small distance from the walls of Verona, the loss of the Goths was not less heavy than that which they sustained in the defeat of Pollentia, and their valiant King, who escaped by the swiftness of his horse, must either have been slain or made prisoner, if the rashness of the Alani had not disappointed the measures of the Roman general. Alaric secured the remains of his army on the adjacent rocks, and prepared himself, with undaunted resolution, to maintain a siege against the superior numbers of the enemy, who invested him on all sides. But he could not oppose the destructive progress of hunger and disease; nor was it possible for him to check the continued desertion of his impatient and capricious barbarians. In this extremity, he still found resources in his own courage, or in the moderation of his adversary, and the retreat of the Gothic King was considered the deliverance of Italy.”

This ignominious retreat had to be conducted in the night-time, or the little band who remained would have fallen into the hands of the Romans. Through by-ways and unfrequented passes they

returned to hostile Pannonia. Alaric was now only a king in name, and scarcely that. Before his defeat, he, at least, was king in the hearts of all his people; still, in their disgrace, with the exception of a few dissatisfied chieftains, they loved him. His misfortunes were all that he could bear—a king without a kingdom; a general without an army; a husband without a wife, and a father without his children. Notwithstanding all these, we have a brighter future for Alaric.





CHAPTER XXI.

TELEMACHUS.



GENERAL joy pervaded all Italy at the downfall of the Goths. Every city had its special celebration. Honorius and Stilicho were praised in eloquent orations and beautiful songs, in the mouths of all classes, as the benefactors of their race and the deliverers of Rome. The Senate itself, after passing the most glowing eulogies upon the virtues of the weak Emperor, resolved unanimously to invite Honorius to the imperial city to celebrate, in grand triumph, the achievement of the Roman arms over the barbarians of the North. This high honor was readily accepted by the young Emperor, and preparations were made at once, both by army and Court.

Let us, for the present at least, take leave of the imperial camp, and choose for our subject the life of a monarch of the desert, rather than the

joy of the monarch of Italy. Not many years previous to this, near the ancient city of Lystra, in the south-eastern extremity of Phrygia, dwelt an aged couple and their only child, a boy of twelve Summers. Their home was a simple one, and their wants few. Their support was a small garden, the products of which they sold in the neighboring city; and a small flock, whose care was left to the young Telemachus, constituted the worldly goods of this little household. The father had been a soldier of the Empire, and had been stationed a great part of his life at Rome. He had seen the great profligacy and wickedness of that Gomorrah of the West. He was familiar with the intrigues and corruptions of Court, of the want of virtue in the people, and of the heathenish barbarities of the amphitheater. But the old soldier had many years since become a devout follower of Christ, and his pious companion in life was truly the saint of that neighborhood. The idol of their affections was Telemachus. Every attention was bestowed upon his religious education. The prayer of both father and mother constantly went up to a throne of grace in his behalf. Nor were their prayers in vain; for, from the earliest days of his childhood, his life was one of the strictest obedience and love. At night, his mother would read to him, sometimes from a little roll of

parchment, on which was written a part of the New Testament, and sometimes from the lives of the monks and martyrs, who had sacrificed their worldly possessions and comfort, and even their lives, in the cause of Christianity. All these made their impression upon his mind, and he often thought to himself, although he never expressed it, that he, sometime, would like to become a monk, and live as holy a life as Anthony, or Paul, or some of the other Christian heroes of the desert. One day, while tending his flock, in company with his father, he began to make inquiries about the people who lived in Rome, asking whether there were many monks in that great city of which he had so often heard. The old man replied :

“Yes, my son ; but if there were ten times the number there that now minister to its ungrateful and unworthy thousands, God would not spare it from the destruction he has prepared for it.” Then casting his eyes over the landscape, as if he were indulging his fancy in a prophetic vision, the old soldier remained silent for a moment, leaning upon his shepherd’s staff.

“But, father, why will God destroy it ; are the people wicked ?”

“Yes ; wicked beyond a hope of their salvation ; for they could not be persuaded to forsake their

vanities, to say nothing of their inhuman barbarities, though one rose from the dead."

"Why! are the Romans barbarous?" asked Telemachus, with a look of surprise.

"Yes, my son; I have often intended to tell you of some of the sights I saw when in Rome, but have hesitated on account of their infamy; but it may be well for you to know the worst, if *worst* there is among them. The cruel games of the gladiators present by far the most uncivilized yet pitiable scenes I ever beheld. I was raised a stern Roman soldier, made familiar with scenes of blood, and the horrors of war; but my heart sank within me as I saw a victorious gladiator plunge his blade into the heart of his antagonist, who, faint from exertion and loss of blood, lay suppliant at his feet. And then to hear the shouts of applause that arose from the delighted crowd of spectators, who had consented to this barbarity, almost made me ashamed that I was a Roman."

"Was the gladiator killed?" asked the boy, in youthful simplicity, but with horror depicted in every feature.

"Yes, killed outright, and his body dragged away, and thrown into the river."

"Why does not the bishop or the Emperor stop them?"

"The good Emperor Constantine did forbid

them, but it was all of no avail ; the people and the officers of the Court are so wicked that they still insist on having such inhuman amusements."

Here Telemachus grew quite thoughtful, his countenance still retaining that painful expression of horror. So absorbed was he in this brief narrative that he forgot to ask any further questions upon the subject.

That night, after the flock had been safely folded and the frugal meal eaten, the mother of Telemachus took down the sacred roll and read from the fourteenth chapter of Acts the account of Paul curing the man who was a cripple from his birth. The boy grew considerably interested in the story of the apostle's visit to their own city, so that the horrible tale of gladiators was almost forgotten. The mother continued to read: "And when the people saw what Paul had done they lifted up their voices, saying, in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men ; and they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker," etc.

As his mother read of the attempt that the people made to sacrifice to them, his mind was somewhat relieved as he contrasted the state of the world, wicked as it was in his own day, with the dark days of heathenism in which the apostles

lived. The old man's mind seemed to flow in the same channel, for, suddenly interrupting the devout reader, he said: "And all this change has taken place in a little more than three hundred years! *Well* may we say with the apostle, 'O! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways *past finding out!*'"*

The reply of Paul to the priest of Jupiter Telemachus applied to himself, especially that portion: "And we preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God." Then and there he resolved that sometime he would become a monk, trusting that by his life and teaching he might become the instrument in the hands of God of turning many from the vanities of the world to the ways of virtue and righteousness.

Years rolled on. The boy became a man. The old soldier had gone to join the ranks of the Celestial army. His devout companion had gone on before, to await his coming. Telemachus had given the little homestead to his new mother, the Church, and he himself had donned the sheep-skin coat and the sandals of the monk. Taking leave of all that remained dear to him, he took up his residence in a cave on the side of one of

* Romans xi, 33.

the neighboring mountains. There, in his solitude, he communed with God, and carefully read the old family parchment that his mother read to him in his childhood. A little garden of vegetables supplied his own wants. The hours not spent in devotion were employed in making mats, which he sold in the city to obtain money for the poor, to whom he ministered.

It was one of these errands of mercy, in the Autumn of the year 403, that took Telemachus to the city of Lystra. A general excitement was apparently prevalent among the people of all classes. In the public square, or market-place, as they termed it, a multitude had collected, and every one was crowding toward the rostrum, on which stood an Imperial messenger, clad in Court dress, bearing the arms of the Empire. Our monk, in the ardor of his young manhood, pressed his way through the crowd until he stood right under the speaker. The messenger proceeded to read an imperial greeting to the people of Lystra, inviting them to visit Rome and witness the grand triumph of Honorius in honor of the downfall of the Goths. The invitation of the Senate was read, and an extensive programme of entertainments, with which the Emperor proposed to delight the people. The most important part of the whole triumph would be the

gladiatorial games at the Coliseum, in the months of December and January.

When Telemachus heard the announcement of gladiatorial combats, a shudder of horror ran through his entire frame. Accompanying the painful emotion that filled his breast, as when his father first told him that dreadful tale, came the bold indignation of his manly love for justice, and hatred of cruelty. The timidity of his boyhood had all left him. He knew no fear of danger, cared nothing for his personal comfort or safety; but, burning with zeal for the right, and the cause both of humanity and Christianity, he stepped boldly forward, stretched his muscular arm and clinched hand upward toward the messenger and shouted, "The curse of Heaven be upon the Emperor and his corrupt Court! God will demand at their hands the innocent blood they shed!" Astonished, for a moment, the royal messenger stood still, while the heroic monk quietly took his departure. His noble countenance and manly bearing cleared an opening. No hand was raised to prevent his escape, but he passed quietly out of their sight before they had time to think of how great an insult had been offered their sovereign.

Telemachus wended his way through the busy and excited city out into the quiet of his desert

solitude. Then, in his hermit cell on the mountain side, he fell upon his knees, and poured forth his soul in prayer to God to make him the humble instrument of reproving this abominable wickedness. All night long he prayed and read from the old manuscript. Yes, prayed that the God of righteousness would point out for him an opportunity to rebuke the Emperor himself, and perhaps touch his heart with a sense of the enormous blasphemy he was about to commit against the Christianity he professed. Nor were his supplications in vain, for, all at once, the thought flashed into his mind that he might go to Rome and entreat Honorius to desist from his proposed barbarities.

After meditating upon the subject well he determined to go, and offer his life, if need be, on the altar of humanity. But few resolutions as noble are recorded in history. To attempt a journey on foot, from the depths of the East to the capital of the West, in Winter, would simply have been pronounced impracticable by any sober thinker. But Telemachus neither thought of the length of the journey, nor of the privations he must endure. His trust was in God, as "his shield and exceeding great reward." After consecrating himself for the last time in his cave, he wrapped his sheep-skin coat around him, put on

his sandals, took his staff in his hand, and turned his face westward, singing, as he went, the consoling words of the twenty-seventh Psalm :

“What foe have I to fear while God is my salvation?
Of whom am I afraid while he sustains my life?
The same Almighty hand that shields me in temptation
Shall also safely guard me in the deadly strife.

Though enemies and foes against my life are scheming,
And hosts of wicked men most furiously ride,
My heart shall never fear their angry weapons' gleaming;
My strength is in Jehovah ; the Lord is on my side.”





CHAPTER XXII.

THE LAST GLADIATORIAL SHOW.

NEAR READER, we will now resume the relation we sustained to each other in the first division of this little work, namely, that of fellow-spectators and visitors at ancient Rome. It is our privilege to witness the pomp of the triumph of Honorius. In order that we may see not only the Emperor, but the people, to the best advantage, we will repair to the Milvian Bridge, on the Tiber, two miles north of the city.

Early as it is, the suburbs and streets are filled, and the house-tops covered, the entire distance. Their anticipations are worked up to the highest pitch; for this is only the third time in a hundred years that they have been honored by the presence of their sovereigns. Preparations for this grand and important occasion have been going on for months, both on the part of the citizens and

the Emperor. The prefect of the city, aided by the Senate, had spared no pains to make every provision for the entertainment of the Court and the citizens of the Empire. The Imperial messenger had proclaimed the welcome in every province, and for a week millions, from every quarter of the known globe, had poured, like an inexhaustible torrent, into the capital of the West, until the public buildings themselves had to be used to accommodate the multitudes of people, who otherwise would have been left without necessary shelter.

But here comes the grand procession. The front of it is already on the bridge. The first we see are the guards on horseback ; following them are the magnificent steeds taken from the chiefs of the Goths ; the ponderous armor and harness worn by the giants are strapped to the saddles. Brilliantly does the sun, as it beams forth on this clear Autumnal morning, glisten and flash from armor and lance point. Nature herself is contributing her share to the triumph of the Christian Emperor. What comes next ? O ! it is the rich spoil of the Gothic camp, borne on the backs of horses and the shoulders of men. What is it ? Why, nothing less than the massy gold and silver stolen from the temples of Greece—the magnificently wrought vessels, and the elegant miniature

images of gods and goddesses, philosophers and sages, the handiwork of the masters of that classic land—all presenting an imposing spectacle to the wondering populace. Following this are the prisoners—the Goths themselves—the barbarians who dared invade Italy. Here every one stands tiptoe to get a glimpse, if possible, of the men whose name so recently sent a general alarm through the whole Empire. The old warriors, with their heavy bucklers, massy helmets, long swords, and bear-skin cloaks, looked noble enough to shame the effeminate degeneracy of the Romans. They were in no disposition, however, to make any personal comparison. Cheer upon cheer arose from the crowds of unfeeling spectators; but they were soon frowned into silence by the stern, scarred-looking faces of their prisoners, whose high cheek-bones contributed to their savage appearance as much as did their long yellow hair add to their novelty. But now we have a new feature in triumphs. The Senate heretofore had practiced the humiliating ceremony of preceding on foot the Imperial chariot. Stilicho, desiring to treat them with more decent reverence—a reverence due to the representatives of the people in any land and age—had permitted them to ride in their palanquins, borne on the shoulders of their slaves. The display is a far

grander one indeed, as chair after chair, cushioned and draped with purple and gold, containing its dignified burden, passes before our straining vision. Following the Senate is the Court, borne in royal elegance, in gilded carriages or palanquins, on the shoulders of slaves, whose dress was nearly as costly as that worn by their masters. Next to the Court comes a car or chariot of unusual size, drawn by beautiful steeds, decked with ostrich plumes, dyed in the richest colors. Even their harness glistens in the sunlight, on account of the rich gold plating. The wonder of the triumph is a giant statue, or effigy, of Alaric, standing erect upon this car, and chained so as to retain its upright position, with golden chains of enormous size. The armor, from head to foot, is richly plated over with pure gold. The mock triumph of the Gothic King called forth one of the most deafening shouts of exultation that rang from that motley and cowardly crowd of spectators during that whole day of wild enthusiasm. They could shout at and mock the image of the man whom they had not the courage to meet in personal combat. But here comes the Emperor himself. The Imperial chariot is drawn by splendid horses, caparisoned in the most gorgeous manner. Seated by the side of the young, but virtuous master of the West, was the great

Stilicho. Each of them are clad in full Roman armor, except their helmets, in the place of which both are crowned with wreaths of laurel. While the people are delighted at the presence of their sovereign, we are sickened by the sight which follows. Chained to the chariot with heavy chains of gold is a beautiful woman. With weary steps she follows the enemy of her husband. Her long golden hair is far more to be admired than the rich jewels that deck her person—heaped upon her in cruel mockery by her captors. Her stately mien, fair and ruddy complexion, large blue eyes, and sorrowful countenance, excited the admiration, but still more the pity of every true Christian. This northern beauty was the wife of Alaric. On one side, tightly grasping his mother's hand, walked a lad of about ten Summers—scarcely old enough to feel his misfortune. Upon the other side walked an attendant, bearing in her arms a child too young to endure the fatigue of the weary march. A sad, sad sight indeed; yet such were the scenes usually witnessed at a Roman triumph. The great army, with its cavalry and infantry, in blazing armor, burnished for the occasion, brought up the rear.

Let us hasten through a by-way to the city, and, having reached it, find our way through the crowds to the Forum. We reach it just as the

Imperial chariot is about to pass under the Arch of Triumph, erected of beautiful marble, just in front of the entrance. This arch had been erected specially in honor of Honorius, and on it was cut an inscription declaring the total defeat and destruction of the Gothic nation. At the entrance of the Forum, Honorius and Stilicho dismounted and ascended the magnificent throne, built expressly for this triumph. The prefect of the city here introduced the two distinguished visitors to the citizens. The Emperor then advanced, and expressed his gratitude to the people for their devotion, congratulated them upon the success of the Roman arms, commended to them the wonderful skill and generalship of Stilicho, and somewhat egotistically spoke of his own coolness and intrepidity during the flight and the siege of Asta. This harangue was enthusiastically received, amid a storm of applause from the servile crowd of spectators.

The prefect announced the order for the celebration of the triumph—including the visits of the Emperor to the several churches, the Senate, and especially remembering to announce the public games and gladiatorial combats to be given by Honorius at the Coliseum for the entertainment of the people.

Amidst the general joy with which this news

was received, the Christian poet, Prudentius, ascended the royal rostrum, and, in the presence of the vast assemblage, exhorted the Emperor to abolish this cruel scandal, and to extirpate the horrid custom, which had so long resisted the voice of humanity and religion. The language of his eloquent verse was: "Let no one die again to delight us with his agonies! Let the odious arena, content with its wild beasts, give man no more for a bloody spectacle. Let Rome, vowed to God, worthy of her prince, and powerful by her courage, be powerful, also, by her innocence." The weak Honorius paid but little attention to the pathetic poem of Prudentius. The vulgar crowd hooted his "*effeminate delicacy*," which happened to be heroism second only to such as we shall yet witness in this chapter. Those heroic lines remain as the richest epitaph that could have been written to his memory.

The first few weeks of the Emperor's residence in Rome were spent in visiting the shrines of the apostles, in making liberal presents to the churches, and in associating himself with the clergy. The numerous details of this protracted triumph it is needless for us to mention. During his residence of several months in the city Honorius did all he could to win the favor of the Church, the respect of the Senate, and the love

of the people. That part of this great celebration in which we are more particularly interested is the public games.

It is late in the month of December. The crowds of people sojourning in the city, instead of decreasing, have increased. Upon the appointed day we, with the rest, repair to the Coliseum. We find every thing prepared with a magnificence worthy of a spectator more noble and patriotic in arms than Honorius. The royal chair is canopied with rich purple, embroidered with heavy gold. The seats prepared for the Court are cushioned with beautiful crimson. The velum, or awning, stretched from wall to wall, is new, and finer than ever before. As the sun's rays strike through it, a shadow of variegated checker-work, of beautiful colors, is thrown over the whole audience. The Emperor being seated, the signal for a chariot race is given. One of the lower gates is thrown open, and a chariot, drawn by two fiery horses, is driven in by a charioteer gaudily dressed, standing erect in his gilded carriage. Presently another chariot enters, and both drive to the starting-point, where the signal is given. Now they go! See how the white sand flies from beneath their hoofs! The coursers strain every muscle; the drivers can barely hold them. The bronzed wheels flash in splendor

whenever a strong ray of sunlight strikes them. Faster and faster they go, until the white foam drops from the horses' mouths, and their nostrils glare with a redness that tells of the effort they are making. Now the hindmost chariot is gaining—yes, and will pass the other, but—O! the driver, just as he is turning the curve, is thrown from his chariot. He is dragged for a minute, bruised and bleeding, through the sand, at a terrible speed. At last he loses the reins. The horses tear round the arena at a furious rate, turning the chariot over and over, scarcely giving the other chariot a chance to escape through the gateway, which is opened, and closed again as quickly as possible. At last the runaway racers become entangled, are thrown on the ground, and the attendants immediately rush to the rescue. With difficulty they are liberated from the entanglement of harness and chariot, and, with many a deep gash in limb and flank, the beautiful chargers are led from the arena. So ends the chariot race, much to the disappointment of the spectators.

But while we look, the decoration of the arena is suddenly changed. Out of the white sand—automatically it would seem—rise rocks and craggy projections, forming caves, hillocks covered with a growth of copse, and, here and there, even

a large tree of tropical growth spreads its branches over the grassy verdure around it. A huntsman, or gladiator, armed only with a short sword, enters the gateway. Calmly and courageously he wends his way through the artificial forest, until he reaches an opening surrounded by numerous rocks and caves. Grasping his sword tightly, he makes a general reconnoiter, to be sure that his savage enemy is not lurking somewhere undiscovered. At this instant a hoarse and continued growl arose from the mouth of one of the caves. This soon deepened into a roar, and a huge lion sprang suddenly from his cave at the gladiator, who skillfully avoided his shaggy foe, and placed himself in position to await a second bound. Presently the lion, after making a circuit over the rocks, crouched and sprang upon the gladiator. The trusty blade did its work. The monster fell back mortally wounded. Regaining his feet, he lifted his head toward the excited spectators, uttered one pitiable cry of despair, and then, rushing toward the mouth of the cave, fell headlong and expired. The dead lion was dragged from the arena, and a bow, with a quiver of arrows, thrown to the brave huntsman. The nervous strain of the combat was a severe one. Large drops of sweat stand on his bare forehead, his heart palpitates, yet he is fresh and strong, and

the Romans, though *Christians* now, know but little mercy. In a moment the half-dozen caves in the center of the arena disgorged, so to speak, as many howling wolves, whose hunger added much to their natural ferocity. At first the hunter was somewhat unnerved, but, retreating to a little elevation, fitted an arrow to his bow and sent it to the heart of one of the howling wolves, killing him instantly. The others, apparently infuriated at the death of one of their number, obeying their savage instinct, rushed toward the archer, bounding and clambering up the rocks. Two of them the skillful bowman sent tumbling backward with his fatal shafts. He fitted an arrow for a third; but the dreadful need of a quick shot rendered the shaft useless, for, instead of reaching the heart of the beast, it had swerved from its course, and only made a flesh wound, which so infuriated the wolf that it instantly sprang right up the crag, till it stood face to face with the gladiator. Arrows were of no use now. No retreat was at hand. The trusty sword was all that could save him. As the infuriated beast sprang at him he struck. The blow was inaccurate. It only added another flesh wound, increasing the rage of his foe. The next, however, was fatal, and the hungry savage dropped dead; but, as it died, it sent up a cry so shrill, so pitiful, as

if for help, that its two remaining companions, who in the mean time had been howling around the foot of the rock, made one desperate effort to climb, and their hold was sure. They clung to the crag, and both mounted it as the swordsman sprang from the opposite side to the plain below. Scarcely had his feet reached the sand when both of the frantic beasts were upon him, their sharp claws tearing long gashes in his back, as they tumbled and fell over him. At first he reeled himself, and almost fell, but regained his equilibrium just in time to dispatch the first monster that assailed him. But now came the struggle. Before the gladiator could extricate his sword from the body of his antagonist, the remaining wolf sprang upon him from behind and bore him down. Wolf and man rolled over and over in the sand, until the man at last seized the throat of the beast with a grip of despair that nearly strangled the monster. The gladiator regained his feet, and, a moment later, struck down the wolf, which again assaulted him. Cheer upon cheer went up from the thousands of spectators, and even the Emperor clapped his hands, and commanded the victor to be brought before him. Bleeding and torn, the gladiator lay upon the sand, so weak from loss of blood that he was unable to walk. The attendants raised him in their

arms and bore him into the presence of Honorius, who with his own hand placed a wreath of laurel upon the brave man's brow. He was then removed to the quarters for special treatment by order of the young ruler. His wounds were only flesh wounds, and were not fatal.

After the excitement had subsided, the prefect of the city announced that the Emperor, in his courteous liberality, had provided for their entertainment a genuine *gladiatorial* show, to be given on the first day of January. The crowd, already intoxicated by the blood they had seen, wildly applauded this generous offer of their sovereign as they retired for that day from the old Coliseum.

The great day of celebration has arrived. It is one of those mild, sunny days seldom known in Winter out of Italy. The first day of the new year (404) is to be one of imperial solemnity. A solemnity not worthy of a Christian prince, it would seem; but the all-wise God, who overrules the wicked councils of men, and turns their folly into his glory, is to preside in the place of Honorius, on this occasion, at the Coliseum. The truth of this we will see further on. As is our custom, we find our place among the pushing, jostling crowd, as eager as any to see this abomination, though, while our eyes look at, our hearts

turn from it. The decoration for this show has been very lavish. Large representations of gladiators have been beautifully painted and hung in every conspicuous place. The young Emperor, in restoring this pagan institution, has done it with a magnificence scarcely surpassed by any of the Cæsars. Neither expense nor ingenuity has been wanting; for, at this time, a new order of entertainment has been adopted, and a "military dance" introduced, resembling the tournament of the chivalric ages. Why such a name should have been given to a tilt or engagement on horseback we are unable to discover. However, the signal for attention is given, and the entertainment is opened by the entrance of two knights in full harness on horseback; their only weapons are blunt lances, or spears, of considerable length. They take positions at opposite sides of the arena, then, dashing their spurs into their steeds, rush together, meeting with a terrible crash. The spear of each is caught by his opponent's buckler, and the horses are thrown back upon their haunches by the severity of the shock. Returning again to their starting-points, the same performance is repeated. This time the buckler of one of the knights is pierced and broken, and he is obliged to throw it away. None the less daunted by this misfortune, he again prepares for

a third trial of his skill. The chargers, by this time, have caught, to a certain degree, the spirit of their riders, and swifter than ever before they close together. The knight who had lost his shield now held his lance with such a firmness and precision, direct for his opponent's helmet, that, in spite of all his efforts, the point struck its aim, fairly bursting the girths of the saddle, and precipitating the unfortunate knight, whose lance had missed his aim, backward over and over upon the sand, while his horse ran at a furious rate round the arena. The victor immediately dismounted, and placed his foot upon the neck of his fallen foe as a sign of triumph.

So ended the first tournament, and the arena was cleared for the gladiatorial combat. The excited audience, all expectant, saluted with a savage shout the entrance of the two combatants. The game is to be a purely genuine one, after the most ancient and heroic manner of conducting them. The gladiators are dressed in beautiful armor, polished and burnished with unusual brilliancy. Both are stalwart, muscular men—one a Goth, and the other, one of the tribe of the warlike Alani, captured during Stilicho's campaign across the Alps. The combat proper is to be introduced by the use of wooden foils, which are handed them. They cross them, strike, and par-

ley in mimic battle, each exhibiting his familiarity with arms until somewhat heated and animated, each with a burning desire to overcome the other, when the attendants throw them their swords. At this moment, the infatuated spectators arose in their seats, clapped their hands, and shouted like wild beasts greedy for the sight of blood; and it would seem, as by a demoniacal possession, that the most sober and worthy spectators, whose Christian purity was unquestionable, were transformed into pagans and savages. The clear ring of the combatants' swords, as they clashed upon their armor, brought forth shout after shout, while the fight grew hotter and hotter. The bold Goth, careless of himself as if his shield were impenetrable, closed with remarkable vigor upon his foe; but in him he found his equal. Again and again both gladiators reeled and regained their footing, until, finally, growing desperate, the two giants, each determined to wipe away the old feud existing between their nations in the other's blood, grasped with a death-grip each other's throat, and would have run each other through and through; but, just at this moment, a monk, clad only in his sheep-skin cloak, covered with the dust of a long and weary pilgrimage, staff in hand, with his strong arm, cleared a way through the furious multitude, burst through their almost impenetra-

ble crowds, sprang into the arena, threw himself between the combatants, snatched the blade of one from his hand, and hurled it across the arena; the other he sent reeling backward, so that he almost fell.

There stood Telemachus, with outstretched hands, like an angel of peace let down from heaven, rude as was his manner. Astonished, the gladiators for a moment stood spell-bound, while the monk, with uplifted hand, rebuked Honorius for his ungodliness.

"O, Emperor of Rome! Thou that hast so shamefully blasphemed the God of the Christians, hast brought a reproach upon his holy Church, hast restored the games of pagans and savages. Thou, like Belshazzar of old, hast been 'weighed in the balances and found wanting!' May God forgive thee for this sin!"

The indignant spectators, interrupted in their fiendish sport, at once rushed down upon this hero of the desert, crying, "Down with him!" "Down with the fool!" "Down with the insulting villain!" And as a herd of wolves, deprived of their expected prey, rush upon one of their own number, so this furious mob stoned and beat this messenger of God, just as the Jews stoned Stephen, the first martyr of Christianity.

Telemachus, overwhelmed under a shower of

stones, fell, the first martyr in the cause of humanity. The gladiators, whom he sought to separate, completed the foul act by plunging their swords into his already mangled body. The object of his journey—yea, of his life, was attained. The purity of his young and noble heart could understand fully the horror of the abuse which he overthrew in his death. His conscience, pure and unseared by seclusion from a cruel and sinful world, could not bear such inhumanity ; for duty called him to rebuke wickedness, though he found it in high places.

The commanding voice of Stilicho soon quieted the tempestuous uproar into silence, and the young Emperor, rising from his seat, with tears in his eyes, his heart full of emotion at the sight of so unselfish an act of heroism, pronounced an edict, proscribing forever the gladiatorial games, and banishing all professional gladiators from the Empire.

In this act, Honorius, though commonly called weak, proved himself to possess a heart of love and pity such as is seldom possessed by a prince. Nor was he a coward ; for, in the face of the millions of pagan citizens of the Empire, soon after this first memorable edict had gone forth, he issued a second, nearly as great as the first, prohibiting the worship of the heathen deities, and

ordering their statues to be broken. These two are a more lasting diadem wherewith to crown the memory of his life than a whole galaxy of victories won by waging war upon his fellow-men.

But Telemachus, the monk who happened to be a hero, was the noblest character of all the early Church. Thousands died for their faith when persecution came; but Telemachus voluntarily offered himself up, a libation upon the altar of justice and an advancing civilization. His blood was the last ever shed in the arena. With it he extinguished the crime of six centuries, and washed away that abomination from the face of the earth.

Every great sin has been atoned for in blood. Such was the order of the Jewish law—such was the order of Redemption, for Jesus Christ stepped in between us and eternal ruin, caught us in the arms of his infinite mercy, and, in saving us, died, like Telemachus, at the hands of a rabble. So it was that the death of our hero was more useful to mankind, to the Church, and to God than was his life. Soon his memory was respected, and his name venerated, by those who rashly took his noble life. Humanity, though it may neglect its heroes in their own generation, fondly looks back to their worthy conduct, and with delight records their names and their history.

Yet posterity has erected no monument, consecrated no temple to the only martyr-monk who, for the sake of humanity, happened "to forget" himself "into immortality." *


* On "Last Glad. Show," see Theodoret, Bk. V, chap. xxvi (Bohn's Eccl. Library); Montalembert—*Monks of the West*, Vol. I, and Gibbon, chap. xxx.





CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

N this closing chapter we propose only to follow our three remaining heroes to their last resting places, where friend and enemy, Roman and barbarian not only find a common home and a common end, but a just reward at the hands of the all-wise and righteous God, who rewards and punishes according to the deeds done in the body.

Stilicho, impressed with the necessity of making peace with so formidable an enemy as Alaric, offered him his friendship, and at the same time the command of the Western Illyricum. Before the stipulations of the treaty could be concluded, however, the Vandals, under their leader Radagaisus, marched into Italy. Although his appointment had not been confirmed, Alaric, true to the faith Stilicho had placed in him, remained neutral until the Roman legions, under the command of

their incomparable commander, had entirely overcome Radagaisus, and driven his barbarian hordes beyond the Alps. The Gothic King then presented a bill of the heavy losses he had sustained, unnecessarily, at the hands of the Romans by their delay in consummating a peace. But, at the same time at which he made these requisitions, he professed himself willing to espouse the cause of Rome, and to become the soldier of Honorius. This *polite* intimation on the part of Alaric as to his wants was easily understood by the keen statesmanship of Stilicho. He at once assembled the Senate, presented the case to them in all its particulars, and submitted to their consideration the choice of peace or war; for he confidently asserted his knowledge of the hostile intentions of the Goths, whose ranks had lately been refilled by multitudes of barbarians who had swarmed down from the North and flocked under the standard of Alaric. After long opposition, Stilicho compelled the Senate to grant the payment of a subsidy of four thousand pounds of gold to the barbarians as the purchase of the peace of Italy.

This very measure proved the death-warrant of Stilicho. Olympius, one of the ministers of the Court, who was envious of the power of the general, took this opportunity to plot his ruin. By degrees he ingratiated himself into the favor of

the young Emperor, and succeeded in convincing him, by a base deception, that Stilicho was in league with the Goths, and sought to put a period to the life of his sovereign in order that he might elevate his own son to the imperial dignity.

Honorius, consequently, retired from Rome to the secure fortress of Ravenna. On the road thither, Olympius prompted him to the execution of a dark and bloody conspiracy; for, on their arrival at the camp of Pavia, Honorius made an address to the troops inciting them against Stilicho. At the first signal, the friends of the brave general who commanded the legion were massacred. Among them were the most illustrious officers in the Empire. Many lives were lost, many houses plundered, and a fearful sedition raged until evening.

When the news reached Stilicho he assembled a council of his worthy generals, who were ready to be involved in his impending ruin. But hesitation and gloomy apprehensions filled his mind; and, in spite of the impetuous call of the assembly for arms, he delayed until it was too late. His confederate, impatient at his hesitation, retired from his tent. At the hour of midnight, a noted Goth named Sarus forced his way into the camp, cut down Stilicho's faithful body-guard, entered the general's tent, where he fortunately lay *awake*

meditating on his approaching end. He succeeded, with difficulty, in making his escape, and, after issuing a last and generous admonition to the cities of Italy to shut their gates against the barbarians, in despair for his safety, he made his way speedily and alone to Ravenna, which was already in possession of his greatest enemy, Olympius.

Stilicho entered a Christian church, and sought safety at its altar. The Court was soon informed of this fact, as the confederate of Olympius, Count Heraclian, with a troop of soldiers, appeared before the church of Ravenna at day-break. Not wishing to violate the rights of sanctuary openly, he practiced a deception upon the bishop, to whom he solemnly swore that the mandate of the Emperor only directed them to secure the person of Stilicho. But, no sooner had the unfortunate general surrendered his person, and crossed the threshold of the church, than Heraclian produced a warrant for his execution. He bore his fate with resignation and calmness. The friends who had collected, and were about to make a useless interference, he persuaded to be peaceable, and with a firmness not unworthy of the last of the Roman generals, he submitted his neck to the sword of Heraclian.

Such, my dear reader, is the ingratitude of the

world. When it crucified its Savior, whom could you expect it to regard? Nor is ingratitude confined to courts or nations, but it is just as prevalent in our every-day life. Still, if we love our neighbor as ourselves, Christ, who suffered so great ingratitude, and who can sympathize best with us, will reward us hereafter.

Alaric, impatient at the delay of the imperial authorities in the payment of the four thousand pounds of gold, again pressed his claim, offering them peace or war for their choice. The insolent ministers disdained to negotiate a treaty with an invader and barbarian, who paid a just tribute of sincere praise to the noble heroism and masterly generalship of the now infamous, as his enemies were pleased to think, Stilicho. Through some secret conspiracy, they excited a universal massacre of the friends of Stilicho and the families of the Goths in every city in Italy.

Terribly incensed at the outrage, Alaric passed the Alps and the Po, plundered all the cities of that part of the Empire, passed in sight of the palace of Honorius at Ravenna, bent his course southward along the shores of the Adriatic, thence across to Rome itself. And the haughty Romans, who had not beheld a foreign foe before their gates for six hundred and nineteen years, looked down upon the barbarians with an insolent con-

tempt of which they afterward repented. When famine began to stare them in the face they sent a deputation to Alaric, telling him that they were willing to capitulate fairly, and upon any terms whereby the Roman dignity would be preserved; but if he were not willing to offer such terms he might prepare to meet an innumerable army, exercised in arms and animated by despair. With quite a hearty laugh, Alaric replied, "The thicker the hay, the easier it is mowed." He then condescended to fix as the price of his retreat from before Rome: First, the surrender of his wife and children. Second, *all* the movable gold and jewels in the city; and, third, the liberation of *all* the slaves who could prove their claim to the name of *barbarians*. The ministers of the Senate, with a more suppliant tone than that assumed at the beginning of the conference, asked: "If such, O King, are your demands, what do you intend to leave us?" "YOUR LIVES!" sternly responded Alaric. Terror-stricken they left his tent; but soon returned and obtained a short suspension of arms; during which more easy terms were agreed to by the conqueror. Among the vast treasures of wealth donated to the Goth, none was so rich or so dear as his family. They were all that he himself wanted from the Romans; but after they had been

restored he thought it necessary that his soldiers should receive something for their privations, and into their hands he placed the rich ransom that had been donated to him.

Alaric withdrew his troops to the fruitful province of Tuscany, where he was joined by Adolphus, his brother-in-law, with a hundred thousand men, whom he had led from the banks of the Danube. Beside this vast army the barbarian forces were strengthened by the accession to their numbers of forty thousand slaves, who had been delivered by the stipulation with the Roman Senate.

The King of the Goths now again renewed his entreaties for a treaty of peace. But all his efforts were in vain. The messengers sent by him to the Court of Honorius were killed, and the haughty Olympius heaped injury upon insult toward Alaric, until forbearance ceased to be a virtue; and the Goths again besieged Rome, effected an entrance, made Attalus, the prefect of the city, the Emperor, and had the promotion ratified by the Senate. Attalus, however, proved to be in no wise the sovereign that Italy then needed, and Alaric, who had turned king-maker, degraded him, and offered to restore the purple again to the helpless Honorius. But Honorius, finding that Attalus had been disgraced, and that the Senate were favorable to him, himself resumed

authority, and rejected all offers of peace from the Goth. His Court, too, swore implacable war and hatred against the invaders; and the consequence was that Alaric again, a third time, marched upon the Eternal City, forced an entrance at midnight, and delivered it up for three days to be sacked by his soldiers; yet the Christian Goths did not so much as enter one of the churches, or disturb a single pound of plate from their treasuries. Heaven itself approved their actions, for, in the midst of the conflagration, the proud Forum, with its innumerable statues of gods and heroes, was leveled to the dust by a stroke of lightning.

The conqueror of Rome now enjoyed for a while the kingdom he had founded; but, having reached Southern Italy, was suddenly taken sick, and died in the flower of his age. His bereaved army lamented in deep sorrow the death of their King, and, as a peculiar sign of their love, they had the river Busentinus turned from its course, and a sepulcher constructed in its bed. This they adorned with trophies of Rome, and the armor and sword of the great King. After the body of Alaric had been deposited in this sacred spot the river was again restored to its natural channel, to flow on forever over the grave of the Goth. In order that the place of interment might never

be discovered the slaves who performed the work were all inhumanly massacred.

Adolphus was at once elevated on a shield and proclaimed King. To him all swore allegiance. He probably was the superior of his predecessor, for, while he possessed the boldness of the Goths, he also had that amiable and pacific nature characteristic of the Roman. He succeeded at once in making peace with Honorius, whose sister, the beautiful Placidia, he married. She and his people were led to that delightful region in Southern Gaul, where he founded the powerful kingdom of the West Goths. Here, after they had won all Spain by their swords, they settled down to the enjoyments of peace.

In this summing up it is only necessary to say, that Honorius, after a disgraceful reign of twenty-eight years, died, leaving no heir to his diadem. His memory was but little respected, and his empire fell into the hands of a usurper.

My dear reader, as the best of friends must part, so must we. Our visit to the Old World has been a long one, and still we are unsatisfied. We would linger yet longer about the ancient walls of the fallen Empire were it our privilege. During our acquaintance we have pointed you to the patient bravery of the gladiator, the self-sacrifice of the monk, the bold heroism of the Goth,

the military genius of the Roman, and the authority of a weak Emperor. But this patience, this self-sacrifice, this heroism, this authority, that we have observed in men occupying such different spheres in the varied gradations of life, will not compare with the love of Jesus Christ, who endured all these things for our sakes, and then ascended on high, to reign King of kings, and Lord of lords. Farewell!

THE END.



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